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A
TREATISE
ON
MIRACLES,

WHEREIN
Their *Nature, Conditions, Characteristics,* and
true immediate CAUSE are clearly stated;

AND
All the *Objections and Difficulties* which have been
hitherto raised against their *Credibility*, or the
Evidence arising from them, especially in Mr.
CHUBB's *Discourse* upon that Subject, are *fully*
Considered, and Answered,

With
A POSTSCRIPT,

Containing
Some REMARKS on Dr. MIDDLETON'S
Introductory Discourse to a Larger Work, &c.

BY
ABRAHAM LEMOINE,
Rector of *Everley, Wilt's*; and Chaplain to
His GRACE the DUKE of PORTLAND.

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THE

MIRACLES



A POSTSCRIPT

ABRAHAM DEMOLIN
Rector of Ebury, W.C. and Chaplain to
His Grace the Duke of Portland

LONDON
Printed for J. Murray, at the Lane against St. Dunstons
Church, in the Strand, 1801.

TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
T H O M A S
LORD BISHOP of SARUM,
CHANCELLOR of the Most Noble
Order of the Garter,
AND
HIGH ALMONER to His MAJESTY,
T H I S W O R K

Is most humbly Inscribed,
As a Public Testimony of Gratitude,
and Veneration,

By his LORDSHIP'S

Most dutiful, and most

Obliged Humble Servant,

ABRAHAM LE MOINE,

TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,

THOMAS

LORD BISHOP OF SARUM,

CHANCELLOR of the Most Noble
Order of the Garter,

AND

HIGH ALMONER to His Majesty,

THIS WORK

Is most humbly inscribed,

As a Public Testimony of Gratitude,
and Veneration,

By his Lordship's

Most Obedient, and most

Obedient Humble Servant,

ABRAHAM LA MOINE.

P R E F A C E.

I*T would be to very little Purpose to acquaint the Reader with the Reasons why the following Work appears so long after the Publication of Mr. Chubb's Discourse on Miracles, &c. which has given occasion to it; but it is necessary to inform him, - that it was composed before his Death, as will be seen throughout the whole Course of it; which could not easily be altered. I wish it had happened otherwise, and that Mr. Chubb was living to see this Treatise, and answer it if he had thought fit. However his Reasonings and Difficulties are still the same: The only Question is, whether I have fully confuted them, or cleared them up; and if any one of his Admirers and Followers thinks that I have not done them Justice, let him take up the Pen, and set this whole Matter in a clearer Light, for I desire no other than to see it once for all properly stated, and fully determined.*

The Subject of MIRACLES, considered in itself, by the mere Light of Reason without the Help of Revelation, is attended with Difficulties

P R E F A C E.

culties not easily removed; and the Manner in which it has been treated of late by our nominal Free-Thinkers, and especially by Mr. Chubb, has only served to perplex it, in order to render the Argument drawn from it in favour of Christianity, utterly insignificant. This led me to wish, that some able Pen would undertake to clear it, and shew how Conclusive it is after all, notwithstanding their sophistical Arts, and affected Pyrrhonism; and at last determined me to attempt something towards it. How far I have succeeded, the Reader will judge; I can only assure him, that I have done my utmost to come at the Truth, and that I have not been biassed by any particular Scheme, or favourite Opinion to answer Mr. Chubb, nor induced to it by any private Views, or personal Pique, having never been otherwise acquainted with him, than by his Writings.

*The Title-Page of his Discourse promises a fair Representation of the various Reasonings on those Questions that relate to the Subject of Miracles: And in his PREFACE he declares, " That he has taken a View of the Sub-
 " ject considered simply in itself, without any
 " View or Regard to any particular Revela-
 " tion; and that he has introduced the various
 " Reason-*

P R E F A C E.

*“ Reasonings upon the several Questions with
 “ which the Subject is concerned, not intending
 “ thereby to raise Difficulties, and make Ob-
 “ jections, these being raised and made alrea-
 “ dy ; but only to give a fair Representation
 “ of what may be said upon both Sides of those
 “ Questions, without making himself a Party
 “ or being interested in what is offered on
 “ either Side.” But it will soon be evident,
 how far he is from keeping his Word, and that
 there is a great deal of Partiality, not to say
 Unfairness, in the Manner in which he has exe-
 cuted his Design. Whoever reads his Discourse
 with any Attention, will easily discover, that it
 is the Work of a Sceptic, whose Aim is to con-
 found the Subject, so as to render it doubtful, ra-
 ther than to clear it up ; or, if he be inclined to
 either Side of the Question, would needs reduce
 the Evidence of Miracles to nothing, and rob
 the Christian Revelation of it. I shall only
 add, that, as he has brought together in a small
 Compass all the Objections that have been hi-
 therto raised upon this Subject, put them in a
 stronger Light, and urged them better than
 any other Author that I have met with ; I thought
 it incumbent upon me particularly to answer
 HIM, to follow him closely, and to let none of
 his Difficulties, that have any Weight or Plau-
 sibility,*

P R E F A C E.

ibility, pass without a proper Solution. If, in doing this, I have not always made use of new Arguments, which is not possible, or given a new Turn to old ones, which is not so easy; neither have I acted the Part of a mere Compiler, as the Public, I hope, will soon do me the Justice to think.

Among the few Faults which have happen'd in printing this Work, either through my own, or the Compositor's Inadvertency, I must desire the Reader to take particular Notice of the following that are most material.

PAG. 141, the last Line, there is in the Hebrew Word the second Letter, a *Coph* Finale, instead of a *Resch*; and therefore read
חַרְטֻמִּים

Page 145, the two last Lines, &c. for if they could not do the first, it was a plain Proof that they were but mere Pretenders, and therefore could not do the last; read, for if they could do the first, it was a plain Proof that they were not mere Pretenders, and therefore could do the last.

Page 157, Marginal Note, l. 14. and indeed, read *nor indeed*.

Page 387, l. 8. It was but in LXV or LXVI, that he went thither, add, for the second Time, and met Peter, as is generally believed.

CONTENTS.

Definition of a Miracle, p. 1.

Mr. Chubb's own Definition, p. 2. Both inaccurate and lame, p. 5.

It is not a necessary Condition of a Miracle, that it should entirely depend upon the Will of the Man who works it, p. 7.

Nor that that Man should foreknow and foretel it, p. 11.

The Instances alledged from Scripture to prove it, cannot be disallowed, under Pretence that it is begging the Question, p. 15.

Our Ignorance of the utmost Extent of human Power does not hinder, but that we may easily judge whether an Action be miraculous, or not, p. 16.

The true Marks or Criteria of Miracles. I. They must be in themselves possible, p. 21.

2. Such as cannot be foreseen by any human Ability, p. 22.

3. Likely of their own Nature, and in all their Circumstances, ibid.

4. They must appear at first Sight, and to a common Understanding, to be the Works of God, p. 24.

God alone is the immediate efficient Cause of Miracles.

This shewn, I. From that we cannot be certain by the mere Light of Reason, that there are other invisible Agents superior to Men, who can perform them, p. 25.

Nor that they have a Power sufficient for it, p. 27.

II. From the Consideration of the Laws or Powers of Nature, which, as true Philosophy teaches us, are the

C O N T E N T S.

the Effects of the immediate Action of God, p. 29.

III. *From the constant and general Opinion of Mankind, p. 35.*

The Case of Moses's Mission examined, and shewn to be a plain Proof of this, ibid.

That the Being who appeared to him, and sent him, was really God, p. 37.

Or the Son of God, the second Person of the holy Trinity, p. 46.

Christ shewn against a modern Author, to have had within himself, and of himself, the Power of working Miracles, which no other Person ever had, p. 49.

All his Miracles are constantly ascribed in the Gospel, either to himself, or to God the Father, as to their immediate efficient Cause, p. 55.

And never to Angels, p. 57.

If Angels are reported in Scripture to have performed Wonders, they were impowered and commissioned by God for it, p. 58.

Miracles proved to be the immediate Operations of God, IV. From the Consideration of the Works themselves, p. 61.

A particular Inquiry to this Effect, into our Saviour's Miracles, ranged in proper Classes, p. 64.

Miracles of THE MATTER, such as turning Water into Wine, which required a Creative, and therefore an infinite Power, p. 67.

As well as the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, p. 68.

And restoring or supplying lost Limbs, p. 70.

Much more raising the Dead. The Absurdity of Mr. Chubb's Reasonings upon this Subject, p. 71.

The Knowledge of Men's Minds, or inward Thoughts, by

C O N T E N T S.

by mere Intuition, which Christ so often displayed, is in the Power of God alone, p. 85.

As likewise that of future Contingencies, p. 87.

The Miracles of THE MANNER required also an Almighty Power to perform them, p. 89.

Those, both of THE MATTER and THE MANNER, were no less visibly the Works of God alone. This fully made out in the particular Case of the Cure of the Demoniacs, p. 93.

None but Christ and his Disciples, ever had or exercised the Power of casting out Devils; and what is said about Exorcisms being in use among the Jews, has no manner of Foundation, p. 96.

Particular Observations concerning the Gift of Tongues, which tho' not exercised by, yet proceeded from Christ, p. 103.

Miracles every where represented in Scripture, as the immediate Work of God, and an absolute Proof of a divine Mission, p. 106.

This shewn in the particular Instances of Joshua, p. 107.

Of Gideon, p. 111.

Of Samuel, p. 114.

Of Elijah, p. 116.

And by several express Passages, p. 121.

Miracles can never be a sufficient Attestation of a divine Mission, nay, they are useless, if created invisible Beings can, by their own inherent Power, work them, p. 128.

If they are not a direct, absolute Proof of a divine Mission, God can never reveal himself to Mankind, p. 133.

New Arguments from Scripture, shewing that Miracles are really such, p. 135.

The Objection taken from the many Wonders, supposed to have been done by wicked Men, or in behalf of false Religions,

CONTENTS.

Religions, *examined and answered*, p. 139.

What the Magicians of Egypt did was all Trick, and mere Slight of Hand. I. The very Names given them shew it, p. 141.

II. *It does not appear from any thing that Moses has said concerning them, that they had any Intercourse with evil Spirits*, p. 144.

III. *All other Authors, who have taken Notice of this Transaction, intimate nothing like it, or rather suppose that it was all Artifice*, p. 149.

IV. *Antient Magic is much anterior to any Account we have of Miracles performed by Men, and did not consist in any familiar Communication with evil Spirits*, p. 155.

V. *It is inconsistent with the moral Perfections of God, to have suffered the Devil to work true Miracles in opposition to his own*, p. 161.

VI. *Moses's Expressions, in relating this Fact, do not import that the Magicians did exactly the same things, as he himself did*, p. 166.

VII. *The Magicians had time to prepare themselves for their seeming Wonders, which increases the Probability of their having done them by mere Slight of Hand*, p. 168.

VIII. *If they had wrought true Miracles, it is surprising that they could neither remove the Plagues, nor produce Lice*.

IX. *Their failing in this last Wonder, was owing to the want of Time to prepare themselves for it, and to the natural Difficulty, if not Impossibility, of the thing itself*, p. 175.

The Passage in Deut. xiii. 1, &c. does not import, that false Prophets may, by the help of evil Spirits, work true

CONTENTS.

- true Miracles. This proved by four particular Considerations, p. 181.*
- The Objection taken from Matth. xxiv. 24. fully answered, p. 188.*
- What St. Paul says concerning Antichrist, 2 Theff. ii. 9. is no Proof that the Devil can work true Miracles, p. 198.*
- From whence the Opinion which ascribes such a Power to the Devil, has taken its rise, p. 203.*
- The great Contempt of Miracles among the Heathens, which a late Writer has endeavoured to make out, is no Argument that they did not generally look upon true Miracles as the Works of God alone, and a proper Attestation of a divine Mission, p. 208.*
- Admitting that superior invisible Beings can, of themselves, work true Miracles, God will never suffer them to exert such a Power for the Delusion of Mankind, p. 213.*
- A full Answer to Mr. Chubb's Reasonings about it, p. 215.*
- Six Considerations tending to prove, that the repeating of Miracles for the Conviction of Unbelievers, is both unnecessary, unreasonable, and even unjust, p. 233.*
- A Man endued with the Power of Miracles, is not at liberty to use it well or ill, just as he pleases, p. 250.*
- There are Degrees of Power, which God can never communicate to a Creature; and therefore when exerted, they afford a plain Proof of a divine Interposat, p. 253.*
- The Good which the Christian Revelation is the Cause of, and the beneficent Nature of the Miracles performed in support of it, are a further Proof of their proceeding from God, p. 256.*
- The want of Universality in a Religion supported by Miracles*

CONTENTS.

Miracles, does not destroy the Probability of their being the Works of God, p. 269.

The Christian Revelation, particularly, not being in Fact universal, is no Objection against its divine Original, nor against the Goodness and Justice of God. This shewn by several Considerations, p. 281.

That tho' God foresaw the Obstacles that would naturally hinder the Propagation of Christianity, yet this was no Reason why he should, either not give that Revelation at all, or give it in a different Manner, p. 295.

The Objection taken from the final State of those who never heard of Christ, which is by Mr. Chubb and other Deists, supposed to be lastingly miserable, fully answered, p. 300.

That though Men might have attained to some Degree of Happiness in another Life, without a Revelation, yet a Revelation was highly useful and expedient, p. 305.

The chief and direct End of Revelation is not to communicate different Degrees of Happiness to Mankind, but to reform and improve them, p. 308.

The want of Universality in the spreading of the Christian Revelation, does not make it probable that it comes from some superior invisible Agent, rather than from God, p. 313.

An Evil invisible Being could not, against his own Inclination and Interest, give to Mankind so excellent a Revelation, as the Christian is manifestly, and back it with Miracles, p. 321.

And a virtuous invisible Agent would not do it, because it is inconsistent with his moral Character to recommend a Revelation as divine, which is not so. The Absurdity

CONTENTS.

dity and Immorality of Mr. Chubb's Reasonings upon this Subject, p. 323.

Miracles afford not only a probable, but a certain Evidence in Favour of the Divinity of a Revelation, p. 334.

The Apostles can be suspected neither of Enthusiasm, nor of Credulity, in their Report of our Saviour's Miracles, p. 342.

The Probability of the Truth of Facts, well recorded, does not, as Deists pretend, decrease by Length of Time. This shewn in the Case of the Miracles mentioned in the New Testament, p. 352.

*The Evidence of the Truth of these Miracles is so far from decreasing by Length of Time, that it actually increases, by new Circumstances attending it; such as,
I. The continual Enquiry made by the most able Men into the Truth of them, p. 356.*

II. The wonderful Success of the Gospel, p. 359.

III. The Completion of several remarkable Prophecies, delivered by Christ, or his Apostles; which we now see, p. 364.

That the Time in which the Gospels, especially the three first, were wrote, is not, nor can be any Objection against the Truth of the Miracles recorded in them, p. 382.

The three first Gospels were published some time before the Destruction of Jerusalem, and consequently within less than thirty Years after our Saviour's Ascension, p. 388.

Though the Gospel of St. John was wrote many Years after that Destruction, yet this does not in the least affect the Truth of it, p. 393.

Particular Observations tending to shew that the Gospels were wrote by those Persons, whose Names they bear, p. 396.

The

CONTENTS.

The Places wherein the Gospels were published, can be no Objection to the Truth of the Miracles reported in them, any more than the Time of their Publication, p. 405.

The primitive Christians were so far from keeping the Books of the New Testament as a secret Treasure, that they did what they could to have them dispersed all over the world, p. 412.

The Miracles, said to have been done among the Jews at Jerusalem, and alleged by Mr. Chubb as an Instance that a Work may have all the Circumstances attending a true Miracle, and yet not be a Miracle at all, proved to be mere Forgeries, p. 420.

That Mr. Chubb very unfairly attacks the Author of the Trial of the Witnesses, &c for not having produced the Testimony of the Apostles in their own Words, p. 438.

That this Testimony is clear, positive, and full; and more than sufficient to satisfy any reasonable Man, p. 444.

Miracles stand upon as good a Foot of Credibility, as any other Facts related in History, p. 450.

The Proof arising from them is fully sufficient to determine our Assent, and therefore those that require a better Evidence, act a very unreasonable Part, p. 456.

A general Conclusion of the whole, p. 460.

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A
TREATISE
ON
MIRACLES, &c.

LEARNED Men of late have given different *Definitions* of *Miracles*, according to their different Notions and Schemes. I shall not here enquire which is the *best* and the *truest*, or whether any of them may be called *full*, and sufficiently *clear*, but shall, without any farther Preface, offer my own, intending to support it by proper Arguments.

A MIRACLE then, in general, is a *sensible* *unusual Operation or Effect*, above the *NA-* Definition of a Miracle.
B TURAL

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

TURAL ABILITY or INHERENT POWER of NATURAL AGENTS, *i.e.* of all created Beings, and therefore performable by GOD ALONE, in Confirmation of some Revelation made, or some Message sent by him to Mankind.

Mr.
Chubb's
own Defi-
nition.

Mr. Chubb, in his *Discourse on Miracles*, has given us a very different Definition of them, with such an Affectation of *Logical Preciseness*, such Windings and Turnings, and such a Redundancy of Ideas and Expressions, as is really tedious, and can only serve to perplex the Subject; and besides, the Fallacy of it is evident. I shall here transcribe it at length, because it is the Foundation upon which his whole Scheme is built.

“ This Term (of *Miracle*) I think, says
“ he^a, is used to express a *sensible Effect*,
“ which is above the natural Ability, or in-
“ herent Power of Man to cause or produce;
“ which is likewise *above* or *besides* the ordi-
“ nary Course of Nature, or of those Laws
“ by which the natural World is governed in
“ the Course of God's general Providence;
“ and which also is produced by the Agen-
“ cy or Co-operation of an *invisible Being*.
“ By the natural Ability of Man, is meant

^a Page 2.

“ that

“ that Ability which arises from our *whole*
“ Composition, with *all* its Improvements,
“ acting *in*, or *upon* Matter, considered as
“ under the Direction of those Laws which
“ the God of Nature has subjected it to. As
“ thus, supposing it to be *above* the natural
“ Ability of Man (when thoroughly ac-
“ quainted with all the Secrets and Powers
“ in Nature, and Master of all the Art
“ which human Nature is capable of attain-
“ ing) *to raise himself up*, and *move through*
“ *the Air* to the Heighth and with the Swift-
“ ness of an Eagle, and that this Effect
“ must be the Produce, not of the ordinary
“ Course of Nature, or of those Laws by
“ which the natural World is governed, but
“ of the *immediate* Interposition and Power
“ of some *invisible* Agent; and supposing it
“ to be *above* the natural Ability of this
“ Man to *discover* that he should be thus
“ raised up, and moved by the Power of
“ another; admitting this to be the Case,
“ then if a Man should be thus raised up
“ and moved through the Air as aforesaid;
“ and if this Operation so far depended up-
“ on the Man’s *Will*, as that he *would*, or
“ *would not* be thus moved through the Air,
“ according as he willed either; or if he on-

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

“ ly *foretold* that this Effect would take
“ Place ; this would be with respect to that
“ Man, *miraculous*, or a *Miracle* ; and he
“ upon whose Will the Operation depend-
“ ed, or who *foreknew* and *foretold* it, that
“ *Man* might be said to work this Miracle.
“ Again, suppose a Man should *will* that a
“ particular Mountain should be *removed*
“ *from its Place, and be carried into the midst*
“ *of the Sea* ; or suppose he should only
“ *foreknow* and *foretel* that such an Effect
“ would take Place, admitting it to be *above*
“ his Ability to cause or produce such an
“ Effect, or to foreknow that it would be
“ effected; and that it was not the Produce
“ of those Laws by which the natural World
“ is governed ; and suppose the Mountain
“ should be removed accordingly ; this would
“ be, with respect to that Man, a *Miracle* ;
“ and he upon whose *Will* the Operation de-
“ pended, or who *foreknew* and *foretold* it,
“ *that Man* would be the Worker of the Mi-
“ racle. For though this Operation was
“ performed, not by the Power of the Man,
“ but by the Power of some *invisible* Agent ;
“ yet as the Power which was exercised in
“ this Case was *subject* to the Man's Will,
“ as to the Exercise of it, or else as it was
“ *revealed*

“ *revealed* to, and *foretold* by him, that such
 “ an Effect should take Place ; so his Relati-
 “ on to the Action, as aforesaid, would ren-
 “ der it his in an improper Sense, and he
 “ would be the *Worker* of the Miracle. And
 “ this is supposed to be the Case in all those
 “ Miracles with which the present Question
 “ is concern’d. For as Miracles are here
 “ consider’d as *Evidences* of the *Divinity* of
 “ a Revelation ; and as divine Revelations
 “ are delivered to the World by the *Mouth*
 “ or *Pen* of some Man ; so no Miracle can be
 “ an *Evidence* of the *Divinity* of a Man’s
 “ Message, except the Power exercised in
 “ working the Miracle be *subject* to the
 “ Man’s Will, as to the Exercise of it ; or
 “ at least, except it be *revealed* to, and *fore-*
 “ *told* by that Man that such an Effect will
 “ take place ; for otherwise it would not ap-
 “ pear that the Miracle was related to one
 “ Man, or to his Message, more than to an-
 “ other ; and consequently not to any Man ;
 “ and therefore it could not be an Evidence
 “ in the present Case.”

Such is the Explanation which Mr. Chubb *Both in-*
 gives us of a *Miracle* ; if it can be called *clear* *accurate*
 and *exact*, I must own my Ignorance, I do *and lame.*
 not know what *Clearness* and *Exactness* are.

But besides the Intricacy, Prolixity, and Obscurity of it, there are several Things in it which deserve Animadversion. His general Definition of a *Miracle*, viz. that it is a *sensible Effect above the natural Ability, or inherent Power of Man to cause or produce*, is so far pretty right, but not sufficient; for he should have said, that it is not only *above the natural Ability—of Man*, but also of *all created Beings in general*, as I shall shew by and by. And what he adds, that it is *likewise above, or besides the ordinary Course of Nature, or of those Laws by which the natural World is governed, in the Course of God's general Providence*, wants Exactness. For, as we cannot determine precisely what this *ordinary Course, or these Laws of Nature* are, and how far they extend; so neither can we decide with any Certainty, at least in all Cases, that such or such an Operation is *above or besides* them. The *Course of Nature* may be different, according to the different Notions Men frame to themselves of it. In warm Climates, where it never freezes, it is *above or besides* the ordinary Course of Nature, that Water should freeze so hard as to bear the greatest Weights; and yet in cold Climates this is Matter of Fact, and very agreeable to
the

the ordinary Course of Nature. And therefore it is a wrong *Definition*, to say, that a *Miracle*, in general, is an *Effect* above or besides this Course, since what is very natural with us, would, according to it, pass for a true *Miracle* in the *East-Indies* or *Africa*^a. And if by the *Laws* of Nature, or by which the natural World is governed, we understand (as I conceive we must) the original Constitution, or essential Properties and Relations of Things; then I say, God himself cannot alter them, without altering, or rather overturning the whole System of the World, which would render Miracles, as Things now stand, *impracticable*, and so far *impossible*. Mr. Chubb, therefore, would have given a much better Definition of a *Miracle*, if he had only said, that it is a *sensible, unusual Effect*, above all the natural Power of Man to cause or produce.

Moreover he supposes two Things, as necessary Conditions of a *Miracle*, which have no manner of Foundation: And first, that

It is not a necessary Condition of a Miracle, that it should entirely depend upon the Will of the Man who works it.

^a See what the excellent Author of *the Trial of the Witnesses*, &c. says upon this Subject, p. 63, 64. from whence I have borrowed the Case of the *Water-freezing*, contrary to the Notion which People in the warm Climates have of the Course of Nature.

it must *so far depend upon the Will* of the Person who performs it, or in Favour of whom it is performed, that it may be done or not done, just *according* as that Person *wills either*. But this is quite absurd. How can a Man dispose, as he pleases, of a Power which is much above his own, and exerted without the least Concurrence of his own? Besides, this *Condition* is so far from being requisite in a *Miracle*, that it naturally destroys it: For if the Power which is necessary to perform it, is so much subject to the Will of a Man, as that he may exercise it *ad libitum*, in Favour of a true or a false Doctrine, for a good or a bad Purpose, (which is what Mr. *Chubb* supposes, and even endeavours to prove in his *sixth Section*, p. 29.) it is just the same as if that Power did not exceed his natural Ability. What is done at our Will and Pleasure ought surely to be considered as our own Act and Deed; and let it be never so extraordinary, as long as it is in our absolute Disposal, it can never be reckoned a true *Miracle*. Did the Power of turning a Rod into a Serpent depend upon the Will of *Moses*^a, when God first commissioned him to go to *Pharoah*, and in order

^a Exod. iv.

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

9

to satisfy him that he would be with him, bade him to cast on the Ground what he had in his Hand, which immediately became a Serpent? This miraculous Power was so far from being subject to him, or at his Disposal, that *he fled from before the Serpent*, being frightened at the Sight of it, and not knowing what it meant. All that he did *willingly and knowingly*, was to cast his Rod on the Ground, (which surely is no Miracle) the Transmutation of it into a Serpent (in which the Miracle did properly consist) was done unknown to him, and independently of him. Did the Will of the Apostles concur at all in the miraculous Cure of those, who by the mere Touch of their Clothes, or Shadow of their Bodies which overshadowed them, were delivered from their Diseases^b? And whoever will take the Trouble to run over all the other Miracles recorded in Scripture, will soon be convinced, that they did not in the least depend upon the Will of those who performed them; and that, excepting our Saviour, in whom the divine Power originally resided, all those that have worked Miracles have shewed by their Words and Actions, that they were, in this

^b Acts v. 15, xix. 12.

Respect

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

Respect, but mere Instruments in the Hands of God. Two or three Passages of Scripture will put this out of all Question. When our Lord cured the *Leper* mentioned *Matth. viii. 2, &c.* he touched him, saying, *I will, be thou clean*; in Answer to what that Man had told him, *Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean*, which plainly shews, that the miraculous Power of healing Diseases entirely depended upon his Will, and was at his absolute Disposal. The same appears from his Answer to the *Scribes*, who taxed him with Blasphemy, because he had said to the Man sick of the Palsy, *a Son be of good Cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee.—Whether is easier to say, Thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk?* But that ye may know that the Son of Man has Power on Earth to forgive Sins, (then says he to the Sick of the Palsy) *Arise, take up thy Bed, and go unto thine House.* It is manifest that our Saviour here ascribes to himself the *intrinsic, inherent* Power of forgiving Sins, and healing Diseases, at his Will and Pleasure; and that he puts both these Powers upon an equal footing, as proceeding from one and the same Cause, his divine Nature, which was highly confirmed by the

^a *Ibid, ix, 2, &c.*

Success

Success of this Miracle. To these Instances may be added that of the Woman that had a bloody Issue, and was healed by the mere Touch of his Garment. But though she did it as secretly as possible, in the Croud that thronged him, he knew it, and said, *Somebody hath touched me, for I perceive that Virtue is gone out of me*, Luke viii. 46. So that this miraculous Power was evidently *inherent* in him, and could not be exerted but by a special Act of his Will. It was not so with the Apostles, and all other inspired Men, that ever worked Miracles. They themselves acknowledge that they did it by a foreign Power, which depended not upon their Will, and was not at their Disposal. Witness what St. Peter said to the Jews who marvelled at his having restored to his Feet the lame Man, *Why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as if by our own Power or Holiness we had made this Man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our Fathers hath glorified his Son Jesus.—And his Name (or his Power and Virtue) through Faith in his Name, hath made this Man strong, &c.* Acts iii. 22, &c.

The second Condition which Mr. Chubb supposes in a Miracle, and seems to think stronger

Nor that that Man should fore-know and foretell it.

stronger still than the first, though it be equally groundless, is, *that the Person who works a Miracle, or in Favour of whom it is worked, foreknows and foretels that such an Effect will take Place.* I own that the Prediction of a Miracle, which comes to pass accordingly, affords a new Degree of Evidence in behalf of that Miracle, because it enables Men to provide against Fraud and Imposture, and shews, at least, that the Effect foretold is not the Production of Chance: But yet this does not alter the Nature of it. Suppose, for Instance, that *Christ* had not foretold the Resurrection of *Lazarus*, or his own Resurrection, would those Facts be less miraculous for it, or less *above the natural Power of Man, or the ordinary Course of Nature*, according to Mr. *Chubb's* own Definition?

But further, there are many Instances, in which the Miracle performed evidently appears to relate to the Man that performs it, or to be done in order to prove the Divinity of his Mission, though that Man did not foretel it, nor perhaps foreknow it. When the *Israelites* saw the Waters gushing out of the Rock, upon *Moses's* striking it with his Rod^a, could they doubt in the least but that

^a Exod. xvii, and Numb. xx.

Moses

Moses had worked that Miracle, and that though he had not foretold it, yet it visibly related to him, and shewed that God was with him? And by his twice striking the Rock at *Meriba*, and God punishing him for it, it is plain that he doubted of the Success, and consequently did not know for certain before-hand, that he should effectually perform the intended Miracle. When, at *Jesus's* Word, the stormy Winds and raging Waves ceased ^a, was this Fact less miraculous, or had it no Connexion with him, because he had not foretold it? And when *Elisha* raised the *Shunamite's* Son ^b, it is evident by the Manner in which he went about it, that he did not know certainly whether the Child should come to Life again. For he sent first his Servant *Gebazi* in Haste, with an Order to lay his Staff upon the Face of the Child, hoping, that upon it, God would raise him from the Dead. But this proving ineffectual, he went himself, and after he had by a formal Prayer implored the divine Power, he stretched himself upon the Child, to communicate to him, as it were, a natural Heat, and bring him by Degrees to Life again; which he repeated twice, *walking in*

^a Mark iv. ^b See 2 Kings iv.

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

the House to and fro, anxious, and visibly uncertain of the Success. Will any one pretend to say, that therefore this Resurrection was not a true Miracle? I might add many other like Instances, but these are sufficient to shew, that it is not a necessary Condition, or a true Criterion of a Miracle, that the Man who performs it should foreknow and foretel it. And indeed, I can't help thinking that Mr. Chubb's insisting so much upon this and the foregoing Conditions, is with no other View but to perplex the Subject more and more, and to overthrow at once the greatest Part of the Miracles recorded in Scripture. For, if we believe him, no Miracle can be an Evidence of the Divinity of a Man's Message, except the Power exercised in working the Miracle be subject to the Man's Will, as to the Exercise of it; or, at least, except it be revealed to, and foretold by that Man, that such an Effect will take Place: And the only Reason he alledges for this extraordinary Assertion is, that otherwise it would not appear that the Miracle was related to one Man, or to his Message, more than to another; and consequently not to any Man; and therefore it could not be an Evidence in the present Case,

(P. 4.)

(p. 4.) The contrary of which, I have now fully evinced.

For though the Instances alledged to support it are taken from the Scripture-History, I hope this Author will not disallow them, under pretence that Miracles are to be considered here without regard to any particular Revelation whatsoever, since they are only brought in to illustrate the Subject, and to shew, that the two forementioned Conditions are not necessarily implied in the Notion of Miracles. And indeed, if we consider that no other Religion, besides the *Jewish* and the *Christian*, lays claim to Miracles, as Evidences of its being from God (as will appear afterwards) and that for this very Reason the Scripture is of all other Books extant the most explicit upon this Subject; it must be owned, that it is next to impossible to treat it without any Reference to it, and most unreasonable to require any such Thing. Mr. Chubb himself, in spite of all his Declarations to the contrary, could not help producing several Passages, both of the *Old* and *New Testament*, to serve his Turn. Surely I may be allowed the same Liberty; and I see no Reason why the Scripture should not be made use of in this Enquiry, as well and better than

The Instances alledged from Scripture to prove it, cannot be disallowed, under pretence that it is begging the Question.

than any other antient Book, as long as the Notions which it gives us of Miracles are agreeable, or at least not repugnant to right Reason. And therefore, if in any Part of this *Treatise* I bring in Instances out of the *Holy Writ*, as Illustrations and Confirmations of my Arguments, I hope this will not be deemed begging the Question; since it is no more than what I would do out of *Livy*, *Pliny*, or any other profane Author, if there were any thing to my Purpose; which I beg the Reader to keep always in his View.

Our Ignorance of the utmost Extent of human Power does not hinder, but first is, how far the natural Ability of Man extends; concerning which he says, "That this seems to be a Difficulty too great for human Understanding to surmount^a." If he means that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to fix precisely the utmost Extent of the natural Ability of Mankind, so as to say, it goes so far, and can go no farther, I readily grant it, and I believe no body will deny it. But then, is it necessary to know

^a Page 11.

this fixed Point, in order to be able to judge whether an Effect which we see is miraculous, or not? If it were, Miracles would be useless, and God could never reveal himself to Mankind that Way. It is sufficient, I think, that we know the Extent of human Power so far in general, as to be *morally* certain that such and such an Action is, or is not above it. For we do not, and indeed cannot, pretend here to *Demonstration* properly so called. What the constant Experience of Mankind, for near six Thousand Years, has shewn to be above the natural Ability of Man, ought surely to be looked upon as being naturally impossible to him, and a sufficient Ground of Assent. “ The first and
“ highest Degree of Probability (says Mr.
“ *Locke*, (whose Authority Mr. *Chubb* will
“ not, I presume, disallow) is when the ge-
“ neral Consent of all Men in all Ages, as
“ far as it can be known, concurs with a
“ Man’s constant and never failing Experi-
“ ence in like Cases.—This Probability rises
“ so near to Certainty, that it governs our
“ Thoughts as absolutely, and influences all
“ our Actions as fully, as the most evident
“ Demonstration; and in what concerns us,

C

“ we

“ we make little or no Difference between
 “ them and certain Knowledge ^a.”

Mr. *Chubb*, it seems, was not quite ignorant of this, and therefore, to prevent the Objections that might be made against him, he owns, that *though this is a Point* (determining precisely the utmost Extent of human Power) *which cannot possibly be fixed by us, yet there are Cases in which there is just Ground for presuming* (and why not for believing?) *that the Effects produced exceed the Bounds of human Power; because in those Cases there is a high Degree* (he should have said *the highest Degree*) *of Probability on the one Side, and but a bare Possibility on the other.* And accordingly, he produces two such Cases, which are his favourite ones, for he often alledges them, perhaps only because no such Cases are to be found among the Miracles recorded in Scripture ^b, and he thinks they are more supernatural than any of those Miracles. One is, if a Man should rise up and

^a Essay concerning human Understanding, p. 281.

^b Indeed our Saviour's Ascension into Heaven might be reckoned one, but perhaps Mr. *Chubb* would not allow it to be so, upon Account of some pretended Difficulties attending it; and as to what *Christ* says to his Disciples, that *if they had Faith, they might remove Mountains* (Matt. xvii. 20.) this was never actually done, and Mr. *Chubb* knows very well that it is but a figurative Expression.

move through the Air, to the Height and with the Swiftneſs of an Eagle; the other is, if a Man ſhould command a Mountain to remove out of its Place, and to ſtand in the miſt of the Sea, and it ſhould be removed accordingly; *then, ſays he, there would be juſt Ground for preſuming, that thoſe Effects exceeded the Bounds of human Power.* One would believe that he is afraid to be too poſitive even in theſe his favourite Inſtances, and whiſt every body, beſides himſelf, would not doubt in the leaſt, but be very certain, that *thoſe Effects exceed the Bounds of human Power*, he thinks that there is but a mere *Preſumption* of it; and moreover he adds, that *in ſuch Caſes we have no certain Proof that the Effects produced exceed the Bounds of human Power*^a, which is indeed ſo very ridiculous, and ſo much againſt the Senſe of all Mankind, that nothing but a Deſign of leſſening the Evidence of Miracles could induce him to write in this Strain.

The *ſecond* Thing which Mr. Chubb judges neceſſary to be *previously* enquired into, is, *Whether there are any other inviſible Agents but God, which can, or which do, at leaſt,* (I ſuppoſe it is an Inaccuracy, and there

^a Page 12.

should be, *which do, or which can at least) act upon this Globe*^b. And thereupon he says, that *as to any Light or Information, which may be supposed to be derived from divine Revelation, with respect to the present Question, that is naturally and necessarily excluded out of the Case*: But to judge of it by the mere light of Reason, *this is a Point that must remain undetermined, and consequently neither the Negative, nor the Affirmative Side of this Question is to be taken for granted, in order to prove any other Point*^c. After such a Declaration, one would hardly have expected to find him so busy, for near fifteen Pages, in examining what Kind or Degree of Power invisible Agents are capable of exercising, and whether God will suffer them to exercise it for the Delusion of his Creatures. Such a Pretender to *Logic* should have saved himself all this Trouble, and argued thus, “ Miracles “ are sensible Effects above the natural Ability of Men, and consequently the Work “ of a Being superior in Power to Men. “ But by the mere Light of Reason, we “ have no certain Knowledge of any other “ such Being but God; and therefore we “ ought to look upon Miracles as the im-

^b Page 12.^c Page 13.

“mediate Productions of God.” For surely we cannot reason about Things which we know nothing of, or of which we have no Proof. But this would have made short Work, and very much favoured the Argument drawn from Miracles; which was not this Author’s Design, who visibly aimed at nothing else, but at perplexing the Subject, and rendering it as problematical as possible.

Having sufficiently disproved the two *Con-* The true Marks or Criteria of Miracles.
ditions, which Mr. Chubb offers as *Rules* to judge of *Miracles*, I shall lay down in few Words the true Marks or *Criteria*, by which those *extraordinary* Operations may be easily distinguished from *natural* Effects, though never so surprizing, or from juggling Tricks, and pretended Miracles.

First then, a *Miracle* must be in itself, or of its own Nature, a Thing *possible*, i. e. such as visibly implies no Contradiction. For God himself cannot produce *contradictory* Effects, or Effects whose Ideas *necessarily* exclude one another; as that a Stick have but one End; that a human Body be in ten thousand Places at the same Time; that a Bit of Bread be turned into Flesh and Blood, without losing the Accidents, Modifications, and Qualities

1. They must be in themselves possible.

of Bread, &c. And by this Rule we reject the pretended Miracle of *Transubstantiation*, maintained in the Church of Rome; since, in whatever Light we consider it, we plainly see it big with Impossibilities and Contradictions.

2. *Such as cannot be foreseen by any human Ability.* Secondly, Miracles must be such Operations *as cannot be foreseen* by any human Art, Penetration, or Ability. This is necessary in order to distinguish them from those surprising Effects of Nature or *Phænomena*, which the Vulgar is so apt to mistake for *miraculous* Operations, but are by learned Men exactly known beforehand, and foretold with Certainty; such as *Eclipses*, *Comets*, &c. And indeed Miracles being *supernatural* Works, and depending upon the sole *arbitrary* Will of God, it is plain that Men can never foreknow them, without a particular Revelation.

3. *Likely of their own Nature, and in all their Circumstances.* Thirdly, It is also necessary, that *Miracles* be in themselves *likely*; by which I mean, that not only they do not favour of *Romance* and *Fable*, which is enough to disprove them, but moreover that they be such as all Circumstances considered, one would think *very probable*, and even naturally expect to find upon Record. And therefore they must be wrought

wrought only upon extraordinary important Occasions, for wise Ends, Ends worthy of God, and where it is fit for him to interpose; as the giving of a new Revelation for the Good of Mankind, or of some Part of them. They must be done without any *Ostentation* or *Apparatus*, which might be liable to Suspicion, and have an Air of juggling Tricks and pious Frauds. They must be connected with subsequent Facts not to be accounted for in a natural Way, or otherwise than by supposing the Truth and Reality of some such extraordinary Operation. For Instance, Is it conceivable that the *Israelites* would have submitted to the heavy Yoke of the Law of *Moses*, and to all the Hardships which they underwent after their coming out of *Egypt*, if they had not seen him do all the Wonders which he performed both in *Egypt*, and in the Wilderness? Is it in the least probable, that such Numbers of People who, at first embraced Christianity, would have exposed themselves for its Sake, as they did, to perpetual Troubles and Persecutions, to the bitterest Torments and Death itself, if *Christ* and his Apostles had worked no Miracles, and the Success of the Gospel had been entirely left to human Means? And therefore

as these subsequent Facts afford a very high Degree of Probability, that the Miracles said to have occasioned them were real, so this is a very good Rule to judge of any Miracle whatsoever. For such extraordinary Operations cannot fail of producing some Effect or other; they will naturally strike the Spectators with Amazement, awaken their Curiosity, render them inquisitive, and engage them to a suitable Behaviour. And by this Rule all the pretended Miracles of the *Heathens*, and of the Church of *Rome*, are easily shewn to be false. For if we look into them, they have the greatest Appearance of Fable and Romance; they were done unnecessarily, and upon the most trifling Occasions, in a dark and clandestine Manner, or with great Shew, and previous Form, not to serve any good Purpose, but rather a very bad one; and they had no Connection with any subsequent Fact, but what may be accounted for in a natural Way.

4. *They must appear at first Sight, and to a common Understanding to be the Works of God.*

Fourthly, and lastly, *Miracles* must be in themselves such as any Spectator, that has but common Understanding, cannot help ascribing to a *supernatural* Cause; they must strike him with the Thought that the *Finger of God* is in them. For Miracles being designed

ed, as will soon evidently appear, for a Confirmation of a particular Doctrine or Message from Heaven, they ought to be of such a Nature, as to convince upon the Spot, and without any great Inquiry, those that see them, the greatest Part of whom are not capable of entering into a minute and critical Examination of their Causes, Reasons, and Ends. In short they would miss their End, and become in a manner needless, if they could not be easily and immediately discovered to come from God. And this brings me to offer my Thoughts concerning the Being or Beings, to whom we are to ascribe the original Power of working Miracles, which is the grand Point to be enquired into.

It has been already observed, and Mr. Chubb himself grants it, that we have no Proof from Reason of the Existence of invisible Agents superior to Men. All that we can pretend to in this respect is mere Conjecture, or at most Presumption. There is indeed no Absurdity in supposing, that there are such Beings; it is even probable to some Degree that they do exist, when we consider the infinite Power of God, the immense Variety of his visible Works, as well as of the Talents and Faculties which he has imparted to Man-

kind;

God alone is the immediate efficient Cause of Miracles. This shewn I. From that we cannot be certain by the mere Light of Reason, that there are other invisible Agents superior to Men, who can perform them.

kind ; and lastly, the visible Scale of Beings below us, which seems to indicate a Continuation of it above us. But because their Existence implies no Contradiction, or is not improbable, does it follow that they do actually exist ? No certainly ; and he must be a poor Reasoner indeed, who concludes any thing from so uncertain Premises. *For, as Mr. Locke very well observes, bating some very few, and those, if I may so call them, superficial Ideas of Spirit, which by Reflection we get of our own, and from thence, the best we can collect of the Father of all Spirits, the eternal independent Author of them and us, and all Things ; we have no certain Information so much as of the Existence of other Spirits, but by Revelation. Angels of all Sorts are naturally beyond our Discovery ; and all those Intelligences——are Things whereof our natural Faculties give us no certain Account at all.—That there are Degrees of spiritual Beings between us and the great God, who is there that by his own Search and Ability can come to know ? Much less have we distinct Ideas of their different Natures, Conditions, States, Powers, &c^a.*

^a Essay on human Understanding, Vol. II. Page 181.
12 Edit.

We cannot therefore, by the mere Light of Nature, ascribe *Miracles*, or Effects that are visibly above all the Art or Power of Man, to any superior invisible Being, besides God, because we know of none else. But even suppose it is very probable that there are such Beings (which is the utmost that can be known by Analogy), yet it does not follow that they are able to work Miracles of themselves, and by their own natural inherent Power; of which we can be no Judges, since we are not acquainted with the Nature and Extent of that Power: Besides that in many Cases, if not in all, an *infinite* Power is plainly requisite to perform them, as I shall shew by and by. And therefore, it is certainly much more reasonable and consistent, to ascribe these supernatural Productions to a Cause, which we know fully sufficient to do them, namely to God, than to an unknown, uncertain Cause, which we are not sure is in all Cases answerable to them, let the Power of those invisible superior Agents be never so great. Nor that they have a Power sufficient for it.

Again, admitting that there are such Beings, can we know from Reason that some of them are *good*, and some *evil*? Not at all; Reason teaches us, that God must have created them all *good*, and that, being endowed
at

at first with Faculties and Perfections much superior to those of Man, they have most probably kept their original Estate. Without Revelation we should not know, nor even suspect any thing of the Fall of a Number of them, and of their terrible Depravation and propense Malice. So that, though we should allow them the Power of working all Sorts of Miracles, yet since we are naturally led to suppose them all *good*, we may be sure (and this will undeniably appear in the Sequel of this *Treatise*) that they never will perform any in Support of a Lye, and for the Delusion of Mankind: We may be sure that they will always act in this Respect conformably to God's Will and Intention. And then it is to us the same Thing, as if their Miracles did come immediately from God.

But if we admit in this Enquiry the Scripture Account of *Evil Spirits* (though Mr. *Chubb* professes to have nothing to do here with *Revelation*), we must also admit what it teaches concerning their Punishment, and the Restraint which God has laid upon them, so that they cannot exert their Power whenever they please, and in what Manner soever they please. And indeed it is natural to imagine that their Punishment must, partly

ly at least, consist either in the actual Deprivation of a great Part of their Power, or in such a Restraint of it, as must render them unable to work Miracles. And if so, we may safely conclude, that no Miracle whatsoever ought to be ascribed to them, as to its efficient Cause. Besides, as I shall fully prove by and by, it is utterly inconsistent with God's moral Character, to suffer them to perform any Miracle in Favour of an Imposture: And as to their working some in Behalf of Truth, there is not the least Probability that they would do any such Thing, against their strongest Inclination, and most visible Interest; or that God would make use of such *bad* Instruments, whilst he has so many *good* ones, to support a Cause which is properly his own.

And therefore, let Mr. Chubb, or any Man besides, make what Supposition, or raise what Difficulty he pleases, to perplex the Question concerning the *true efficient Cause of Miracles*; it must be finally resolved into the Power or Will of God alone.

Moreover, if we consult true Philosophy, we shall be still the more convinced of this. For it is now plain to a Demonstration, that all the Principles of Motion, or Action in the

II. From
the Consideration of
the Laws
or Powers
of Nature,
which as

true Philo-
sophy teach-
es us, are
the Effects
of the im-
mediate
Action of
God.

the material World, which we commonly call the *Laws or Powers of Nature*, as *Gravitation, Attraction, Repulsion*, and the like, are but the Effects of the incessant and immediate Operation or Influence of God, seeing they can never be explained upon *mechanical Principles*. “ All Things that are done “ in the World, says Dr. *Clarke*^a, are done “ immediately by God himself, or by *cre-* “ *ated intelligent Beings*, Matter being evi- “ dently not at all capable of any *Laws* or “ *Powers* whatsoever, any more than it is “ capable of Intelligence ; excepting only this “ one *negative Power*, that every Part of it “ will of itself always and necessarily conti- “ nue in that State, whether of *Rest* or *Mo-* “ *tion*, wherein it at present is. So that all “ those Things which we commonly say are “ the Effects of the *natural Powers of Mat-* “ *ter*, and *Laws of Motion*, of *Gravitation*, “ *Attraction*, or the like, are indeed (if we “ will speak strictly and properly) the Ef- “ fects of *God's* acting upon Matter continu- “ ally and every Moment, either immediate- “ ly by himself, or mediately by some *cre-* “ *ated intelligent Beings*.——Consequently “ there is no such Thing, as what Men

^a Demonst. Part 2. p. 377, Edit. 9.

commonly

“ commonly call *the Course of Nature*, or
“ *the Power of Nature*. The Course of Na-
“ ture, truly and properly speaking, is no-
“ thing else but the *Will of God* producing
“ certain Effects in a continued, regular, con-
“ stant and uniform Manner; which Course
“ or Manner of acting being in every Mo-
“ ment perfectly *arbitrary*, is as easy to be
“ *altered* at any Time, as to be *preserv'd*.

The ingenious Author of *an Enquiry into the Nature of the human Soul*, &c. has, in my humble Opinion, put this out of all Dispute. A whole Section of his Work is taken up in proving as clearly as possible, that the natural and necessary Consequence of the *Vis inertiae*, or of the Want of active Powers in Matter (which is fully made out in the foregoing Section) is, that all those Effects, commonly ascribed to certain *natural Powers* residing in Matter, are immediately produced by the Power of an immaterial Being; and that no less than an infinite Power is requisite for it. But this is more especially, and, I may say, demonstrably shewn with respect to the mechanical Motions of our Bodies, or those Motions which are performed without our Concurrence or Co-operation; such as the Circulation of the Blood, Respiration, &c.

For

For if we examine them duly, and inquire into their efficient Cause, we shall find that they never can be produced by the Agency of finite immaterial Beings, but must be the immediate Work of the Creator himself.

“ For my own Part, says a *Great Man*, though to another Purpose, “ when I consider how I live, that all the animal Motions necessary to my Life, are independent of my Will, that my Heart beats without my Consent, and without any Direction, that Digestion and Nutrition are performed by Methods to which I am not conscious, that my Blood moves in a perpetual Round, which is contrary to all known Laws of Motion; I cannot but think that the Preservation of my Life, in every Moment of it, is as great an Act of Power, as is necessary to raise a dead Man to Life^a;” let me add, as is necessary to give Life to a Body that never was alive, or to create a living organized Body.

The before-mentioned Author carries this still farther, and extends it even to all our spontaneous Motions; so that, as he says, *the greatest Philosopher cannot account for the Motion of his own Finger, without having re-*

^a The Trial of the Witnesses, &c. p. 65.

course to God's Power immediately put forth in the Performance of it^a. I shall, for Brevity's sake, refer the Reader to the Work itself; and take it now for granted that what we call *the Course of Nature*, is properly speaking, nothing else, but *the Effect of the immediate, constant, and arbitrary Will or Power of God*. Now if it be so, then whatever is *out of*, or *above* that *Course*, or, in other Words, *Miraculous*, must of Necessity be his *immediate Work* also; for who can make Exceptions or Alterations in his arbitrary Method of producing and regulating all the visible Effects in the material World, but himself? To suppose that any inferior Being has the Power to do this, and has actually ever done it, *without being empowered and commissioned by God for it*, is to suppose that the Creature can, at any time, act in the natural World against the Creator's determinate Will and Pleasure, and defeat his Designs and Proceedings; which is equally absurd and blasphemous. I say, *without being empowered and commissioned by God for it*; because I would not absolutely deny but that, as Dr. Clarke supposes, in the Place before cited, *This continual acting upon Matter*, (from

^a Vol. I. p. 182.

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which

which all the visible Effects of the material World do proceed) *is performed by the subserviency of created Intelligences, appointed to that Purpose by the supreme Creator.* Only I cannot admit what he adds, that in that Case, *'tis as easy for any of them, and as much within their natural Power, (by the Permission of God) to alter the Course of Nature at any Time, or in any Respect, as to preserve or continue it.* For by the Reason before alleged, 'tis no more within their natural Power to do the one, than to do the other. God must not only *permit*, but actually *enable* them to perform this. And if what Mr. *Baxter*, (the Author of the Book, before cited) asserts, and I think clearly proves, be true, that the great *Laws of Motion*, which cannot be explained upon mechanical Principles, such as *Gravitation, Attraction, Repulsion, &c.* require an infinite Power to be effected; then, I am sure, no created Being, no Angel (let his natural Power be conceived ever so great) is able to *preserve or continue the Course of Nature*, nor consequently to *alter* it, by performing *Miracles*, which therefore must of Necessity be the immediate Work of God.

And

And indeed, if we inquire into the general Opinion of Mankind in this Respect, as far as History goes, we shall find that Miracles have always been looked upon as such.

III. From the constant and general Opinion of Mankind.

Hence it is that all Religions have, more or less, pretended to them; for this supposes that they thought them a good Proof of a divine Assistance and Support. The Jewish and Christian Religions especially, (which I consider here, not as Revelations from God, but *historically* only, as making Part of the Religions of Mankind) put this out of all doubt.

When Moses was commanded to go to the People of Israel, and acquaint them with God's gracious Design of delivering them from their Egyptian Bondage; he answered directly, and said, *But behold they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my Voice, for they will say, The Lord has not appeared unto thee.* Upon which God told him, that he would endue him with the Power of working Miracles, and gave him upon the Spot a Specimen of it, by two very great Wonders which he made him perform; *that they may believe, says he, that the Lord God of their Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.* And ac-

The Case of Moses's Mission examined, and shown to be a plain Proof of this.

cordingly it is observed, that when *Moses and Aaron had done the Signs*, or those very Miracles before-mention'd, *in the Sight of the People, the People believed, &c.* Moreover, when God sent *Moses to Pharaoh*, he told him, *See that thou do all those Wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine Hand.* And again, *When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, shew a Miracle for you*, or to prove that you truly come from God (which intimates that *Pharaoh* did so, though it be not expressly mentioned) *Thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy Rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a Serpent*^a. All this plainly shews, that both *Moses* and the *Israelites*, and *Pharaoh* himself look'd upon Miracles as the immediate Work of God, and the properest and most direct Proof of a divine Mission; and that God himself countenanced this Notion, and acted conformably to it. Nay, the *Magicians* themselves were in the same way of thinking, when they publickly confessed that the Production of *Lice*, which they could not imitate, was *the Finger of God*, or an Operation that shewed visibly his immediate Power, and which no

^a See *Exod. iii.* and following.

Art or Power, inferior to his, was able to perform. But of this more hereafter.

That it was really God, or the supreme Being, who appeared to *Moses*, and empowered him to work Miracles, and not one of his Ministers, the Angels speaking in his Name, as some have imagined because it is said at first, that *the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a Flame of Fire, out of the midst of a Bush*, is plain from the following Considerations. First, he calls himself *the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; and *Moses* desiring to know his Name, that he might satisfy his Brethren in that Respect, he tells him, I AM THAT I AM, or JEHOVAH, the incommunicable Name of the supreme Being, since it imports *Self-Existence*, which is the Foundation of all infinite Perfection: Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. It is true, that those who are in the contrary Opinion, think to solve this Difficulty, by supposing, that as the *Angel* here spoken of, was God's Minister and Representative, he might very well make use of his Name, and speak as if it had been God himself. But in answer to this, I ask, is it usual for Ambassadors of Kings, &c. to call

That the Being who appeared to him, and sent him was really God.

themselves by their Master's Name, even upon the most solemn Occasions? And would not that Man, who should in a publick Audience begin his Speech after this Manner, for instance, *I George the Second of Great-Britain, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c.* or, *I the Republick of Holland, declare to you, &c.* be laughed at, as a very ignorant, or very ridiculous, impertinent, vain Man? Certainly this neither is, nor ever was the Practice of any Nation under the Sun^a; and consequently cannot be that of a created

^a All the Instances alledged in favour of the contrary Opinion (*Vid. Cleric. Comment. in Genes. cap. xvi.*) are not parallel to this, as I might easily shew; but for Brevity's Sake I shall only take Notice of that in *1 Kings*, chap. v. 2, &c. *And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest how that David my Father could not build an House unto the Name of the Lord his God.—But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every Side, &c.* And these are said, *ver. 7.* to be the Words of Solomon, as if he had actually spoken them, though they were delivered by his Ambassador. But first, this might have been done by a Letter expressing these very Words, as well as by the Mouth of a Minister. Secondly, It is not said that the Person whom Solomon sent to Hiram, spoke these Words, but only that *he sent to Hiram, saying, Thou knowest, &c.* which is plainly the Historian's own Way of expressing the Message sent by Solomon, without determining in what Manner it was delivered. The Case before us is quite different from this. There is no Declaration of any Message sent from God to Moses. The Angel of the Lord appears to him, calls him by his Name, and without any Preface, or Explanation, tells him, *I am the God of thy Father, the God of Abraham, &c.* and when desired to make himself better known, he says, *I AM THAT I AM, JEHOVAH.* Are these parallel Cases?

Angel

Angel sent by God, whose Language, to be understood by Men, must be accommodated to the Customs and Ways of speaking among Men. And it is no less certain, that one cannot find in the whole Scripture another such Instance as this is pretended to be. On the contrary, we see those blessed Spirits, when sent from God to Men, acknowledging their Mission, and speaking of themselves with great Modesty^b.

Let me observe further, that some People seem to talk of the Ministry of Angels in divine Revelations, as of a thing of Course, or as if it were beneath the Majesty of God to reveal himself immediately to Men, not considering that, being present every where, and possessed with infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, it can be no Trouble to him, nor any Disparagement to his Glory, to give outward and sensible Signs of his Presence, or to manifest his Will upon any particular Occasion, by a Voice speaking in a determinate Place, without any visible Organ or Instrument to utter it; as was done in the Case of *Abraham* (*Gen. xxii.*), of *Samuel* (*1 Sam. iii.*), and of *Elias* (*1 Kings xix.*); at our Saviour's *Baptism* and *Transfiguration*,

^b See *Revel. xix. 10. xxii. 9.*

and before the Multitude, (*John xii. 28.*) And to say, as a late learned Author does, that *it never appears throughout the Old Testament, that the great God ever did upon Earth any Miracle, but by means of his Son, or some Angel or other, who executes his Commands*; is to assert a thing, which is very far from being certain. How does it appear, that the *Flood*, for Instance, the greatest Miracle that ever was, was not the immediate Work of God? In all the Wonders that *Moses* did in *Egypt*, there is not the least Intimation made of any Angel assisting or empowering him so to do. On the contrary, it is expressly said, that the same *Jehovah*, who appeared to him, and spoke to him at first, enabled him upon the Spot to work two great Miracles with his Rod, which he was to repeat before the People; and soon after charged him, saying, *See that thou do all those Wonders before Pharaoh, which I have put in thine Hand*, or empowered thee to perform^e. Again he tells him, *I have made thee a God to Pharaoh*, i. e. to represent me, in a manner before him, not only by declaring to him my Will, but especially by executing my Judgments upon him and all his People, through a Series of

^e *Exod. iv. 21.*

astounding Miracles, which I shall enable thee to work in his Presence.—*And the Egyptians shall know, that I am the Lord (JEHOVAH) when I stretch forth my Hand upon Egypt, and bring out the Children of Israel from among them*^d. And all along it is the same *Jehovah* that gives his Orders to *Moses*, and by whose Directions and Power *Moses* acts, and to whom he constantly applies for the removal of the Plagues, at the Desire of *Pharaoh*. Nay the *Magicians* themselves, as I have already observed, soon acknowledge that these Wonders are the Effects of *the Finger*, or of the immediate Power of *God*; not of an Angel, but of the supreme Being, for so it is manifest they understood it. The Passage of the *Red Sea* is expressly ascribed to him (JEHOVAH) throughout the Relation of that wonderful Event, *Exod. xiv*; and *Psal. lxxvii*. It is said, that JEHOVAH *went before the People, by Day in a Pillar of a Cloud, and by Night in a Pillar of Fire, to lead them the Way (Exod. xiii. 21.)* All the Miracles which *Moses* did afterwards in the Wilderness, are represented as done by JEHOVAH's special Command, and immediate Power. And when God tells him (*Exod. xxiii. 20.*) *Behold I send*

^d *Ibid. vii. 1, 5.*

an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the Way, and to bring thee into the Place which I have prepared; it is easy to see, by what he says immediately after of this Angel, that it could not be a created one, but the Angel of the Covenant, (Mal. iii. 1.) &c. even Christ himself, the Son of God, Beware of him, and obey his Voice, provoke him not, for he will not pardon your Transgressions; for my Name is in him, (ver. 20.) Can this be applied to the most exalted created Spirit? Are we to obey Angels, as God himself? Have Angels the Power of forgiving Sins? And is God's Name, or his Perfections and Attributes in them? Such Descriptions can never belong to a mere Creature, but are perfectly agreeable to the Notion which the Scripture gives us of the second Person of the Holy Trinity. I shall not enlarge now upon this Subject, because I shall by and by have an Opportunity of speaking to it again. But I have said enough to shew, that the before-mentioned Passage is so far from contradicting what I maintain, viz. that all the Miracles of Moses in the Wilderness, as well as in Egypt, were the immediate Productions of God, that it rather confirms it.

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The same may be said of the Miracles done by the Prophets that came after; it does no where appear that they were assisted, or empowered, by any Angel to perform them; nor is there the least mention made of Angels concerned in those Transactions. But if God has *some Times* employed his Angels in the Execution of some extraordinary Work or Miracle (as I readily grant, since we find Instances of it in Scripture) does it follow that he has *constantly* done so? The Authority of the *Jews* asserting, that *one cannot find an Instance, where God did any Work, but by the means of some Angel^c*, which the above-mentioned Gentleman alledges in support of his Opinion, has very little Weight, if any at all, in such a Case as this, where we have the Scriptures to direct us: And the Passages upon which he seems to lay much Stress, are nothing to his Purpose. It is true that *no Man has seen God at any Time, nor can see him*, (John i. 18. 1 Tim. vi. 16, &c.); But is it necessary that God, in order to reveal himself to Man, should make himself visible, or appear under some Shape or other? Cannot he by a Voice formed in the Air, without any visible Instrument or Organ to utter it,

^c *More Newsch.* Part II. Cap. 6.

as has been before observed, manifest his Will and Pleasure? As to the Passage, *John v. 37.* it is not fairly quoted; our Saviour speaks there to the *Jews*, who would not receive him, notwithstanding all his Miracles, and he tells them, not that *no one hath heard at any Time the Voice of God*, as this Gentleman renders it, but *Ye have neither heard his Voice at any Time, nor seen his Shape*; which makes a wide Difference, for does it follow that because the unbelieving *Jews* had not heard God's Voice, *no one* ever did? Observe further, that the original Word, which our Translators have rendered by *Shape*, imports in general *Appearance* or *Figure*, *Face* and *Countenance*². And as God has not a Body, nor consequently any *Figure*, &c. so has he no *Voice*, properly speaking; And therefore it is manifest that these Words of *Christ* cannot be taken literally; they are metaphorical, and mean no more than this, that the *Jews* did *not know* God, just as we cannot be said to know a Person, till we have seen him and heard him. What our Saviour adds immediately, shews that this was his true Meaning; *and ye have not his (God's) Word abiding in you, for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not*, (ver. 38.) But to proceed,

² *Eidos.*

A se-

A *second* Reason that shews, that it was God himself, and not a created Angel, who spoke to *Moses* from the Bush, is, that he not only takes the Name and Titles of God, but is expressly call'd JEHOVAH by *Moses* himself, who certainly knew who it was that appeared unto him. For, immediately after having related the Sight of the burning Bush, which raised his Surprise, and gave him the Curiosity to go and see what it was, he says, *And when the Lord JEHOVAH saw that he turned aside to see, &c.* (Exod. iii. 4.): And afterwards he constantly calls him by the same Name, and never by that of *Angel*. Now the pretended Solution above-mentioned cannot be of any use here; for admitting it were usual and consistent with the Character of an Ambassador, to assume the Name and Titles of the Prince whom he represents; yet surely the Beholders, or the Historian, who report the Fact, would not give him those Titles, but call him by his own Name, and say that it was the Minister of such a Prince, and not the Prince himself. Otherwise such a way of speaking, besides the Absurdity of it, would introduce a great Confusion in History. And therefore, since *Moses* calls the Person who spoke to him, *Jehovah*, we cannot doubt
but

but that it was really the supreme Being.

Lastly, This Person is represented in *Deut.* xxxiii. 16. as the Author and Fountain of the Blessings which *Moses* wishes, by a prophetic Spirit, to the Posterity of *Joseph*. *Blessed of the Lord be his Land*, says he, *for the precious Things of Heaven, and for the Good-will of him that dwelt in the Bush*, or appeared to me under the Symbol of the burning Bush, which can never be said of a created Angel. But our Saviour himself puts this out of all Question, when, in answer to the Objection of the Sadducees, he says, *And as touching the Dead, that they rise, have ye not read in the Book of Moses, how in the Bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, &c.* (*Mark* xii. 26.) Here is a most positive Declaration that it was God himself that spake to *Moses* from the burning Bush.

Or the Son
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nity.

It is true that in the History of this miraculous Transaction, it is said, that *the Angel of the Lord appeared unto Moses, in a Flame of Fire, out of the Midst of a Bush*. But this may easily be reconciled two Ways. *Either* we may suppose that there appeared in Fact a created Angel, under a visible Shape or Figure; but that the Voice that spake to
Moses

Moses was not the Voice of that Angel, or did not proceed from him, but was formed in the Air immediately by God himself, who through it revealed his Will to the Prophet. This is agreeable enough to his Way of proceeding in former Times ; for we frequently meet in the Old Testament with Angels appearing, not to act under him, or speak in his Name, but to give visible Signs of his particular Presence, and the better to dispose the Minds of the Beholders to the Revelation which was to follow. And this may be further supported by St. *Stephen's* Relation of the Fact (*Acts* vii. 30, &c.), who seems to take it in that Light, *There appeared to him, says he, in the Wilderness of Mount Sinai, an Angel of the Lord in a Flame of Fire in a Bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the Sight ; and as he drew near to behold it, the Voice of the Lord, (not of the Angel) came unto him saying, I am the God of thy Fathers, &c.*

But, the best Way of solving this seeming Difficulty, and in my Opinion the only one truly satisfactory, is to say, that the Angel who appeared in the Bush was not a created Angel, but the Son of God himself, the second Person of the *Holy Trinity*, who is often called in Scripture, *the Angel of the Lord*,
or

or the Angel of his Presence, the Angel of the Covenant, &c.^a. because he was to be sent into the World in our Flesh, as a Messenger from God; and being God himself, he might assume the Name of God, and make these temporay Apparitions, recorded in the Old Testament, *Presages* and *Forerunners* of his more solemn Mission^b. This is the Doctrine of the primitive Fathers, especially of *Justin Martyr*, alledged by the before-mentioned Gentleman himself, though to another Purpose; for he says positively, both in his *first* and *second Apology*, that he that spake to *Moses* from the Bush, and enabled him to work Miracles, was *Christ*. And yet this Gentleman seems unwilling to own that it was so in Fact; *I will not enquire*, says he, *whether it was Christ, or another Being inferior to him, who thus appeared, but it plainly was not THE GREAT GOD, AND FATHER OF ALL*. If he means that it was

^a Gen. xvi, &c. Exod. xxiii, &c. Judg. vi. Isai. lxiii. Mal. iii. &c.

^b See *Pool's* Annotations. There is a Passage in *Genesis* xlviii. 15, 16. which very much confirms this Hypothesis. *Jacob* blessing *Joseph's* Children, says, *God, before whom my Fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my Life long unto this Day, the Angel which redeemed me from all Evil, bless the Lads, &c.* It is plain that this *Angel* here is the same with *God*, the supreme God; especially considering that *Jacob* implores his Blessing, which surely he would never have done, had it been a created Angel.

not *God the Father*, or the first Person of the *Holy Trinity*, I grant it; but if he excludes the Deity in general from the Case, I deny it, since it was *God the Son*, as I have sufficiently shewn: And I think it would have been worth his while to have enquired whether it was *Christ*, or no; because if it were, then surely he could not say, that it was not *God*, unless he does not believe that *Christ* is *God*.

Here I cannot help taking notice of a very extraordinary Observation of his, namely, "that our Saviour himself, whilst he was upon Earth in his incarnate State, seems constantly to have been under the Guidance and Influence of the *Holy Ghost* in all his wondrous Works; and whatever he did, it was by a Power communicated to him by that Person." To what Purpose this Observation is brought in, I cannot conceive; for the Author's Design in the preceeding and following Pages, is to shew that *God* himself never did any Miracle upon Earth; but if the *Holy Ghost* be *God*, all the Miracles performed by *Christ* are, according to this Observation, to be ascribed to *God*, as to their immediate Cause;

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for *Christ* it seems, had no Working-Miracle Power of his own, no more than the Prophets and the Apostles, and what he did was the immediate Operation of the *Holy Ghost*. But leaving to the Author himself to reconcile this pretty plain Inconsistency, how does he prove his Assertion? Why, by four or five Passages, none of which are any thing to the Purpose, viz. *I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew Judgment to the Gentiles*, Mat. xii. 28; which has no manner of Relation to the Power of working Miracles, but only to the Publication of God's Will. Again, *If I cast out Devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you*, Ibid. § 28. Here the *Spirit of God* does not signify the *Holy Ghost*, or the third Person of the *Holy Trinity*, but the *Power of God*, as appears by the par allel Passage in St. *Luke* (xi. 20.), where instead of *the Spirit of God*, we read *the Finger of God*, which is the same as his Power. By this Power the Man *Christ* was enabled to cast out Devils; for he speaks of himself here in his *human* and not in his *divine Nature*, according to the Notion which the *Pharisees* had of him; as is plain from

his stiling himself *the Son of Man* in the Sequel of his Discourse to them. As to those other Passages wherein it is said, *that he was full of the Holy Ghost*, Luke iv. 1; *that God gave him not the Spirit by Measure*, John iii. 34; *that God anointed him with Spirit and with Power*, Acts x. 38. they visibly relate to our Saviour's *human Nature*, as being capable of receiving supernatural Gifts and Powers, which cannot be said of the divine Nature; and as they do not exclude or destroy his *Godhead*, so neither do they suppose, as the Gentleman would have it, that he had no Miracle-working Power of his own, or inherent in him, as he must have had, if he were truly *God*, as well as *Man*.

And indeed, this appears so plainly, both from the Manner in which our Saviour performed his Miracles, and from his own express Declarations, that it is a Wonder to me, how any one that has read the Gospel can deny it, or explain it away. I shall not repeat what I have already said in this Respect^a; I shall only observe, that *Christ's* Miracles were done with such an Authority

^a P. 9, 10, 11.

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

as visibly shewed him to be the immediate Author of them. *I will, be thou clean*, said he to a Leper who applied to him for Relief, and immediately his Leprosy was cleansed^a. He healed Diseases at a great Distance, by declaring his Will, that it should be so^b; In a violent Tempest he rebuked the Winds and the Sea, and there was a great Calm^c; *Come out of the Man, thou unclean Spirit*, and when the Devils besought him to send them into the Swine, he gave them Leave^d; *Young Man, I say unto thee, Rise*; and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak^e; *Lazarus come forth*^f, &c. And all this he performed without any previous Form, or Application to any superior Being whatsoever; without any thing, in short, that might indicate that this miraculous Power was not his own, and at his own Disposal^g. There is but one Place in the whole Gospel, that seems to make against it;

^a Mat. viii. 3. ^b *Ibid.* y 13. *John* iv. 46. &c. ^c *Ibid.* y 26.

^d Mark v. 8. &c. ^e Luke vii. 14, 15. ^f *John* xi. 43.

^g The distinctive Mark, and if I may so call it, the grand Characteristick of Omnipotence, is to do Things without any Instrument, or the Use of any Means whatsoever, by a mere Command, or Act of the Will. And so God is represented creating the World, *Gen.* i. 3. *He said, Let there be Light, and there was Light*, &c. *Pf.* xxxiii. 9. *He spake, and*
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it; It is in the last mentioned Case, the Resurrection of *Lazarus*; where it is remarked, that when they had *taken away the Stone from the Place where the Dead was laid, Jesus lift up his Eyes and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me*; which supposes that he had before prayed to God to enable him to raise *Lazarus*. But then it is plain from what follows, that tho' he had a particular Reason, and a very good one, for so doing, yet he was not *necessitated* to it; *I know*, says he, *that thou hearest me always: But because of the People which stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me*^a. And indeed, if the Father and he are but one, as he expressly declares in the foregoing Chapter, § 30. he might, when upon Earth, perform the greatest Wonders, at all Times, and upon all Occasions, without the Concurrence of any superior Power. This is fully confirmed by what he himself says concerning it; *What*

it was done, he commanded, and it stood fast. And therefore since Christ, in performing his Miracles, acted after the very same Manner, there is no doubt but that he had an infinite Power of his own. Hence it is that the very Creation of the World is ascribed to him, *John* i. 3. *Colos.* i. 16. *Heb.* i. 2; and that he is called ALMIGHTY, Παντοκράτωρ. *Rev.* i. 8.

^a *John* xi. 41, 42.

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

Things soever the Father doth, these also doth the Son likewise^a. For as the Father raiseth up the Dead, and quickneth them; even so the Son quickneth whom he will^b. And as the Father hath Life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have Life in himself^c, or to be the Author and Spring of Life, to have the Right and Power to impart it. I am the Resurrection and the Life, or the first Cause and Disposer thereof, says he to disconsolate Martha, to convince her that he had in himself the Power of raising her Brother from the Dead^d. And he more than once ascribes to himself his own Resurrection, as to the first and immediate Cause of it; Destroy this Temple, says he to the Jews, meaning the Temple of his Body (John ii. 19.), and in three Days I will raise it up. Therefore doth the Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I might take it again. — I have Power to lay it down, and I have Power to take it again (Ibid. x. 27, 28.). Can any Thing be clearer and more to the Purpose? Add to this, that when he sent both his twelve Apostles and the seventy Disciples, to preach the Gospel in Judea, he gave them the Power of working

^a John v. 19. ^b *ibid.* 21. ^c *ibid.* 26. ^d *Ibid.* xi. 25.

Miracles, as if it had been his own, and with an absolute Authority; and that all those who performed any in his Life-time, are said to have done them *in his Name*, or by calling upon him, and by his Power. So that no Doubt can remain, but that he had within himself, and of himself, such a supreme Power. The Apostles themselves, after they had received the Holy Ghost, oftentimes ascribe to *Christ* the Wonders which they performed, and declare that they did them by his Authority. *In the Name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk^a; Jesus Christ make thee whole, Arise and make thy Bed^b &c.* And if they conferred the same Power on other Christians, it was by *Prayer* and *Impositions of Hands*, and not as our Saviour, without any *previous Form*, and in an *authoritative Manner*. So far from it, that sometimes this miraculous Power was bestowed upon their Hearers without any Concurrence of theirs, as in the Case of *Cornelius* and his Company^c.

In short, our Saviour's Miracles are no where in the Gospel ascribed to the *Holy Ghost*, as to their *efficient Cause*; but are all along represented as the *immediate Producti-*

^a Acts v. 6.

^b *Ibid.* ix. 34.

^c *Ibid.* x. 44.

All his Miracles are constantly ascribed in the Gospel, either to himself, or to God the

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*either of the Son himself, or of the Fa-
ther ; which comes to the same, since the
Father and he are but one, as has been al-
ready observed. It is not till after the De-
scend of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles,
according to Christ's own Promise and Ap-
pointment, that we find miraculous Gifts
attributed to him ; and therefore Christ
cannot be said to have been under the Guid-
ance and Influence of the Holy Ghost in all
his wondrous Works ; and that whatever he
did, it was by a Power communicated to him
by that Person ; for, as our Saviour himself
declares, the Holy Ghost was not yet given,
because That Jesus was not yet glorified^a.
The Passage, 1 Cor. xii. 9, &c. alledged in
Favour of the contrary, is so far from as-
cribing all miraculous Gifts to the Holy
Ghost alone, exclusively of the Father, or of
the Son, that in the foregoing Verses, these
Gifts are expressly referr'd to both, as to their
efficient Cause ; Now, says the Apostle, *¶*
*4, &c. there are Diversities of Gifts, but the
same Spirit, from whom they all proceed.
And there are Differences of Administrations
(or Offices in the Church, which are enu-
merated, ¶ 28.) but the same Lord (Jesus**

^a John vii. 39.

Christ,

*Christ, who has instituted them all, and is consequently the Author of the miraculous Gifts annexed to them.) And there are Diversities of Operations (or of working of Miracles) but it is the same God which worketh all in all; where the very same Expression is used, as with respect to the Holy Ghost, y^e 11. But all these worketh^r that one^a *inewi*. and the self same Spirit. And again, y^e 28. God hath set (or ordained, appointed, instituted) some in the Church, first Apostles, secondarily Prophets, thirdly Teachers; after that MIRACLES (or rather miraculous Powers), then GIFTS OF HEALING, Helps (or Ministrations) Governments, and DIVERSITIES OF TONGUES.*

But not to insist any longer upon this, it is *And never to Angels.* evident, that the Miracles recorded in the New Testament are no where ascribed to *Angels*, but only to God, either the *Father*, or the *Son*, or the *Holy Ghost*. Mention is made of *Angels* *ministring* to *Christ*, *comforting* him, or at his Command and Disposal; but never assisting him in his wondrous Works; which would be very surprising and unaccountable, if they did really assist him and enable him to do what he did. They attended at his Resurrection and Ascension; but

but they neither raised him from the Dead, nor carried him up into Heaven; they themselves never said any thing like it to the Women, or to the Apostles, to whom they appeared upon those two solemn Occasions. The same Observation holds true in the particular Case of the Apostles; for tho' they were sometimes deliver'd from the Hands of their Persecutors, or directed in the Execution of their Ministry by the Assistance of *Angels*, yet the Miracles which they performed, are never said to be done by the Help or Concurrence of those blessed Spirits, but are constantly ascribed to the Power of *Christ*, or of the *Father*, or to the Influence of the *Holy Ghost*. From all which, I think, I may safely conclude, that true Miracles are all along in the *Old*, but more especially in the *New Testament*, represented as the immediate Productions of God; so that this Assertion of the Gentleman, *that it never appears throughout either, that the great God—ever did upon Earth any Miracle*, is very far from being true.

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impower-*

We read, indeed, of Angels having performed wonderful Deliverances, or executed no less wonderful Judgments; as the Angel who smote the first-born of *Ægypt*; *that* who killed 185,000 *Assyrians* in one Night; *that* who

who delivered the Apostles out of Prison, ^{ed and} &c. But whether they did it by their own ^{commis-} Power, or by the Power of God, the Scrip- ^{sioned by} ture does not tellus; and therefore no Argu- ^{God for it.} ment can be drawn from these Instances against the general Position, that God alone can work true Miracles. As Angels were then commissioned by him, so were they probably impowered by him to perform those Wonders: And I am the more inclined to believe they were, because I find that the Smiting of the first born of *Egypt* is attributed to God himself; for it is said more than once, that the *Lord smote the Egyptians, all the first-born of the Land of Egypt*; and he himself speaks thus by *Moses, About Midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first born in the Land of Egypt shall die, &c.*^a. Not that I would deny that Angels are naturally endued with a very great Power, much superior in all Respects to that of Man, since the superior Perfection of their Nature implies it, and they are said in Scripture ^b to *excell in Strength, to be mighty, or very powerful*. As their Action upon Bodies is,

^a Exod xi. 4, 5. xii. 12, 23, 27, 29.
² Thes. i. 7.

^b Psal. ciii. 20.

and

and must naturally be, both invisible, and very quick and strong; they can, no doubt, take away a Man's Life in a surprizing Manner; but I cannot conceive how one Angel alone could kill in an Instant, or at least in a very short Time, all the first-born, both of Men and Beasts, throughout the whole Kingdom of *Egypt*, which was so very populous and abundant in Cattle. This could not be effected by any Plague, or pestilential Air, by Lightning, or any other such Means, because it would have indiscriminately destroyed Men and Beasts, and not singled out the *first-born*; and therefore it required an almighty Power, as well as an infinite Knowledge, to inflict such a Punishment, as this, upon the *first-born*, and them only. So likewise, how could any single Angel smite, in the Space of a few Hours, without the least Noise, or any Symptom, or Mark, or Wound attending it, 185,000 *Assyrians*? for so it happened, as appears by all the Circumstances of that wonderful Event. This seems to me to require more than a finite Power, let it be ever so great, because it could not be performed by the Application of any external Means, which must naturally have took up some considerable Time,
occasioned

occasioned some Disturbance, Outcries, and Groanings in the Camp, and left upon the dead Bodies some Marks of Violence; so that it must have been done by a mere Act of the Will of the Being who executed this Judgment; but this is the peculiar Manner of acting of God, as was before observed, and consequently can never be that of any Creature whatsoever. And this leads me to consider the *Miracles* recorded in Scripture, either in *themselves*, or in the *Manner* in which they were performed; by which it will plainly appear, that they were not, nor could be the Works of created Angels.

I confess I was not a little surprized at the strange Assertion of the learned Gentleman whom I have already often mentioned. Discourfing upon this very Subject, he fays, " Let the Miracles of our Saviour be ranged " into their refpective Orders, according to " our Conceptions of the Difficulties which " attend their Performance, and there is none " of them that feem to require an abfolute " *Infinity of Power.*" I will try to do this, and I hope to be able to fhew, that all the Miracles which our Saviour performed in *direct Confirmation of his Doctrine*, none excepted,

Miracles proved to be the immediate Operations of God.

IV. *From the confideration of the Works themfelves.*

ed, did require an *absolute Infinity of Power*, either as to the *Matter*, or the *Manner* of them; for though the *Gentleman* does not seem to like this *Distinction*, it is both plain, and founded in the Nature of the Facts themselves. I say, in *direct Confirmation of his Doctrine*, because there are some particular Wonders of *Christ*, which were not intended to prove his divine Mission, and might possibly have been performed by a Power less than infinite; such as *his walking on the Waters, his stilling the Tempest, his drying up the Fig-tree from the Root, the wonderful Draught of Fishes, &c.* For as these were done before his Disciples only, their Truth might have been questioned; and Miracles are designed for the Conviction not of Believers, but of Unbelievers. And therefore in this Enquiry, we must confine ourselves to those Miracles, which either were appealed to by our Lord himself, as Evidences of his being sent from God, or appear to have been a sufficient Ground of Assent to them that believed on him upon the Spot. Two or three Passages in the Gospel-History will make this very plain. When *John the Baptist* sent his Disciples to *Jesus*, to know of him whether he was the expected *Messiah*, they found him

him actually employed “in curing many of
 “ their Infirmities and Plagues, and of evil
 “ Spirits, and in giving Sight to many that
 “ were blind.” *And he said unto them; Go
 your Way, and tell John what Things ye have
 seen and heard: How that the Blind see, the
 Lame walk, the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf
 hear, the Dead are raised^a. And when he
 healed the Man possessed with a Devil, who
 had rendered him both blind and dumb^b, all
 the People were amazed and said, Is not this
 the Son of David, or the Messiah? The Cure
 of the impotent Man at the Pool of Bethesda,
 made many of the People believe on Jesus, and
 say, When Christ cometh, will he do more Mi-
 racles than these which this Man hath done^c?
 And upon the Resurrection of Lazarus, Ma-
 ny of the Jews which came to Mary, and had
 seen the Things which Jesus did, believed on
 him^d: And it is plain from what our Saviour
 said two Days before he went to raise him
 up, and at his Grave, that he particularly de-
 signed this Miracle for the Confirmation of
 his Gospel, or, to use his own Words, *that
 the People may believe that thou hast sent me,*
 (Y 15, 42.).*

^a Matt. xi. 4, &c. Luke vii. 20, &c.

^b Matt. xii.

^c John v. 5, &c. compared with vii. 31.

^d Ibid.

xi. 45.

Now

A particular Enquiry to this Effect, into our Saviour's Miracles, ranged in proper Classes.

Now of these kinds of Miracles there are about thirty, recorded in the four Gospels, with their particular Circumstances; besides a vast many more that are only mentioned in general, or just hinted at*, and those that were done at our Saviour's Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension. That I may range them into their respective Orders, according to our Conceptions of the Difficulties which attend their Performance; I shall divide them into three different Classes. Some are *miraculous* as to their *Subject-matter*, or in themselves, without any Regard to their particular Circumstances; others are *miraculous*, as to the *Manner of their Performance*, or the Way in which they were wrought; and others again, are *so in both Respects*.

MIRACLES of the MATTER.

1. Our Saviour's turning a large Quantity of *Water* into *Wine*, at a Wedding at *Cana of Galilee*, John iii.

2. His feeding several thousand People with *five Loaves* and *two Fishes*, Matt. xiv. Mark vi. Luke ix. John vi.

* See Matt. iv. 24. viii. 16. ix. 35. xv. 30. xxi. 14. John xx. 30. xxi. 25.

3. His

3. His doing the same thing again, with *seven Loaves*, and a few *small Fishes*. *Matt.* xv. *Mark* viii.

4. His *raising from the Dead* the Widow's Son at *Nain*, *Luke* vii.

5. His *raising Jairus's Daughter*, *Matt.* ix. *Mark* v. *Luke* viii.

6. His *raising Lazarus*, *John* xi.

7. His *discovering Men's inward Thoughts* and *Reasonings*, and *searching their Hearts*; of which there are several Instances. See *Matt.* ix. 4. xii. 25. xxii. 18. *Mark* ii. 8. *Luke* v. 22. vi. 8. vii. 39, &c. *John* ii. 24, 25. vi. 64. compared with *John* xxi. 17. *Acts* i. 24. *Revel.* ii. 23.

MIRACLES of the MANNER.

8. The *Cure* of the *Nobleman's Son*, who was at the *Point of Death* at *Capernaum*, *John* iv.

9. That of *Peter's Mother*, who was sick of a *Fever*, *Matt.* viii. *Mark* i. *Luke* iv.

10. That of the *Leper*, *Ibid.*

11. That of the *Man sick of the Palsy*, *Matt.* ix. *Mark* ii. *Luke* v.

12. Of another, *John* v.

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13. Of

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

13. Of another, *Matt. xii. Mark iii. Luke vi.*

14. Of another, *Matt. viiii. Luke vii.*

15. The Cure of the Woman that had an Issue of Blood, *Matt. ix. Mark v. Luke viii.*

16. That of two blind Men, *Matt. ix.*

17. That of a Man that was dumb and deaf, *Mark vii.*

18. That of the blind Man at *Bethsaida*, *Mark viii.*

19. That of the Man that had the Drop-sy, *Luke xiv.*

20. The ten Lepers cured, *Luke xvii.*

21. The two blind Men of *Jericho* cured, *Matt. xx. Mark x. Luke xviii.*

22. *Malchus's* Ear restored, *Matt. xxvi. Mark xiv. Luke xxii. John xviii.*

23. The Cure of the Man born blind, *John ix.*

**MIRACLES both of the MATTER
and MANNER.**

24. The Cure of the *Demoniac* in the Synagogue of *Capernaum*, *Mark i. Luke iv.*

25. That of the *Demoniac*, dumb and blind, *Matt. xii. Mark iii.*

26. That

26. That of the two *Demoniacs*, *Matt.*
viii. Mark. v. Luke viii.

27. That of the *dumb Demoniac*, *Matt. ix.*

28. That of the *Canaanite's Daughter*,
Matt. xv. Mark vii.

29. That of another *dumb Demoniac*,
Matt. xvii. Mark ix. Luke ix.

30. That of another, *Luke xi.*

31. That of the *Woman that had a Spirit*
of Infirmary, and was bowed together, *Luke*
xiii.

I do not pretend to have exactly ranged
these Miracles *in their proper Order*; per-
haps I have misplaced some; I may also have
omitted some others: But this is nothing to
the Purpose, because they must belong to
one or other of these three Classes; and it will
be enough to shew, that in which-soever of
them they must be placed, they cannot be
the Work of any created Being.

In order to this, it is not necessary, I
think, to enter into a particular Examination
of every one of them; neither will it require
any great Depth in *Metaphysics*; general
Observations, such as are obvious to all think-
ing Men, may suffice.

To begin therefore with the MIRACLES
OF THE MATTER, I observe, that to turn

F 2

Water Miracles
of the Mat-
ter, such
as, turnin

Water into Wine, which required a creative, and therefore an infinite Power.

Water into Wine (which is the first mention- ed), a creative Power is required, as much as to form a new Substance; for, excepting the *Liquidity*, which is common to both, all the *essential Properties* of the *Wine* must have been given to the *Water*, that is, the Particles of *Water* must have received a new Configuration, Texture, Motion, specifick Gravity, &c. in short, have been *formed anew*; and the Subject Matter of it could no more be of Use towards such a *Transmutation*, than the matter of the *Chaos* towards the *Creation* of any Body whatsoever. And if it be so, as it cannot be denied upon true *philosophical Principles*, then, I am sure, this could never have been performed by the natural inherent Power of the most exalted *Angel*. *Creative Power* does *essentially* belong to God, and must so far belong to him only, that were he to communicate it in any Degree to an inferior Being, we could have no *certain Demonstration* of his Existence, *à posteriori*, since the Works of the Creation might possibly be the Production of some other Being besides.

As well as the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.

The same *creative Power* was no less requisite, and indeed appears more evidently still, in the *Multiplication of the Loaves* and

and Fishes. For to multiply them, was really to create all that Quantity, necessary to feed such Numbers of People, above the little that was found at first. Real Bread was distributed to every one of them; they all eat, and were satisfied, and what remained, considerably exceeded what the Disciples had delivered to their Master. Which Way-soever we consider this vast, sudden, and invisible Supply, we cannot without Extravagance ascribe it to any other Cause, but the infinite Power of God. We have in the second Book of *Kings* iv. 42, &c. a parallel Case, in some respects, which will very much confirm this Observation. *Elisha* having received of a Man twenty Loaves of Barley, of the first Fruits, ordered his Servant to feed with them a hundred Sons of the Prophets, besides other People, which were come to him, probably for Relief, as well as for Instruction, there being a Dearth in the Land, (ver. 38), And his Servitor said, *What, should I set this before an hundred Men?* But he (*Elisha*) said again, *Give the People that they may eat; for thus saith the Lord (JEHOVAH), They shall eat, and shall leave thereof.* So he set it before them, and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the Word of the Lord. If this

Multiplication of Bread is so plainly ascribed to God himself, much more ought we to refer to him immediately *those* of our Lord's above-mentioned, since he fed not *one* or *two hundred*, but *several Thousands* of People, not with *twenty* Loaves, but with five, or seven only; and what was left is said, very much to exceed that Quantity.

And restoring or supplying lost Limbs.

I may here, I hope, be allowed to alledge another Instance of a *creative Power*, though I have not mentioned it in the foregoing Enumeration of our Saviour's Miracles, because there is no particular or circumstantial Relation in the Gospels of any such Case; it is that of restoring, or supplying lost Limbs. We read, *Matt. xv. 30, 31.* that *great Multitudes came unto Jesus, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, MAIMED, and many others, and cast them down at his Feet, and he healed them. Insomuch that the Multitude wondered when they saw the Dumb to speak, THE MAIMED TO BE WHOLE, the Lame to walk, and the Blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.* That these Maimed were really deprived of some of their Limbs, appears from that the very same original Word, here employed to describe them, is made use of in *Matt. xviii. 8.*

to express the Loss of, either Hand or Foot, by an actual Amputation : *If thy Hand or thy Foot offend thee, says our Saviour, cut them off, and cast them from thee : It is better for thee to enter into Life halt or maimed, (Κυλλὸν), rather than having two Hands or two Feet, to be cast into everlasting Fire.* As to the other Word, which imports the Cure of these Maimed (ὅγιαι) it signifies whole (integer), as well as *healthful* (sanus); and therefore our *Version* has justly rendered, *when the Multitude saw*——THE MAIMED TO BE WHOLE. Now to supply the Loss of a Limb, requires as much a *creative Power*, as to form a new organized Body, which I hope no Man will ascribe to mere Angels, for the Reasons before alledged.

The next kind of *Miracles of the Matter*, *Much more* is the raising of the Dead. If we believe *raising the Dead.* Mr. Chubb, this is not *perhaps* above the *The Absurdity of Mr. Chubb's Reasonings upon this Subject.* Power of Men, must less of Angels. What he says about it is so extraordinary, and discovers so fully his sceptical Humour, that I cannot forbear taking particular notice of it. His Words are these, "The animal
" Life (as the Case appears to us) has a Con-
" nexion with, and a Dependance upon a

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

“ *Body* fitly organized, and stored with
 “ Juices, and those Juices in a proper Mo-
 “ tion, &c. So that if some of the *prin-*
 “ *cipal* Parts of the Machine are thrown
 “ into any *great* Disorder, or if the *Juices*
 “ are let out, or stagnate, or the like, then
 “ a *Cessation* of Life, which we commonly
 “ call *Death*, will ensue, except some *speedy*
 “ Remedy be applied, to *correct* the Dis-
 “ order in the Machine, or to *stop* the Dis-
 “ charge of the Fluids, or to *thin* and re-
 “ store them to their proper Motion, &c.
 “ or, in other Words, to remove that, what-
 “ ever it be, which would have been, if
 “ not removed, the *Ground* and *Cause* of
 “ the Cessation of Life. And as Life is thus
 “ *exposed*, so it has sometimes been preserved
 “ when in the *greatest* Danger. A skilful
 “ Surgeon or Physician, by a timely Inter-
 “ position, has sometimes *prevented* Death,
 “ by removing a Disorder, which otherwise
 “ would speedily and unavoidably have end-
 “ ed it. Yea, sometimes, by a timely and
 “ proper Application from a skilful Person,
 “ Life has been *restored* after a short Cessa-
 “ tion, that is, after all the Marks and
 “ Symptoms of Life have disappeared: I
 “ say, in some such Instances, Life has
 “ seemed

“ seemed at least to have been restored.
“ *Thus far* it is evident that the natural Abi-
“ lity of Man extends. But that this is the
“ utmost Extent of human Power, ought
“ not to be said, because we cannot tell what
“ *farther* Knowledge and Experience may
“ render Men *capable* of doing. But sup-
“ posing it may *possibly* be above the natural
“ Ability of Man to restore Life, after *one*,
“ or *two*, or *three* Days Cessation, or some
“ other given Time ; yet it will not follow
“ that it is above the natural Ability of *eve-*
“ *ry other* created Being ; seeing the Extent
“ of Men’s Power cannot be a Rule to us,
“ by which we may judge of the Abilities
“ of other Agents, whom we are not ac-
“ quainted with^a.”

All this Reasoning is so very pitiful, that I could never have thought Mr. Chubb capable of it, had I not seen his Name prefixed to the *Discourse on Miracles*. *Death has sometimes been prevented by a timely Interposition of a skilful Surgeon, or Physician ; THEREFORE Life may be restored by the same Means. Sometimes by a timely and proper Application from a skilful Person, Life has been restored after a short Cessation, i. e. after all the Marks and Symptoms of Life have disap-*

^a P 15, 16.

peared

peared ; (this *Salvo* was very necessary, otherwise one would have imagined that the Author meant a *total Cessation*, for so it might be, tho' never so *short* ; but he understands no more by it, than that *all the Symptoms of Life had disappeared*, which may be the Case of a profound Lethargy, and is not a *certain Proof* of an *actual Death*) THEREFORE Man may deliver from Death, and has in himself the Power of bringing to Life again. Or, if he has it not *actually*, he may acquire it, for *we cannot tell what farther Knowledge and Experience may render Men capable of doing* ; and *because we cannot tell this*, THEREFORE, forsooth, they may in Time *do any thing*, for ought we know, even those Works which *seem* to require an *infinite Power* ; or, admitting that this is not impossible, THEREFORE,—what?—Why, no doubt, it follows, that the Resurrections performed by our Saviour might have been effected by a mere human Power. And lastly, *because tho' such a Miracle may possibly be above the natural Ability of Man, yet it will not follow, that it is above the natural Ability of every other created Being* ; THEREFORE such other created Beings, as Angels, can of themselves, and independently of God, per-
from

form it. Or, because *the Extent of Men's Power cannot be a Rule to us, by which we may judge of the Abilities of other Agents*; THEREFORE other Agents, *Angels*, can do every thing which Men cannot do. Let these Conclusions appear ever so absurd and ridiculous, they naturally follow from Mr. *Chubb's* own Premisses, or Reasoning.

And indeed a Man must be strongly biased in favour of Infidelity, or *Pyrrhonism*, to assert, or only suppose, that the raising of the Dead may be effected by the *natural inherent Power* of any created Being whatsoever. For in order to it, it is not enough, as Mr. *Chubb* seems to think, to *restore the disordered Parts of the Body* to their primitive State, or the *Juices to their proper Motion*, Fluidity, or Quantity; it is necessary, besides, to reunite the Soul to it, which was separated from it. But has Man, or can he have, any Power over Souls? The Angels themselves have none; at least not so far, as to dispose of them at Pleasure, much less to unite them to a Body: Reason teaches us, that HE only who is the first Author and Creator of those two different Substances, and of their original Union, has in himself the Power of restoring them, and
knitting

knitting them so closely together. As this *Union* was first an *Act of Creation*, so it must likewise be whenever it is effected again; and therefore can be the Work only of God himself. I call it an *Act of Creation*, because by it a new Kind of Being, namely *Man*, is made, which without it could never have existed; and a very surprizing one it is, since there is *naturally* no Manner of Connexion betwixt the Soul and the Body, their Natures being quite different in all Respects; so that nothing, but the arbitrary Will and Pleasure of the infinite Creator of both, could have joined them together so closely, as to constitute but one individual Being, and to act reciprocally upon one another, in such a Manner as that particular Motions in the Body excite immediately in the Mind particular corresponding Ideas, and *vice versâ*. Consequently, tho' it should be granted in general, that Superior Orders of Spirits have a Sort of Power over the inferior Orders, it would not follow, that therefore Angels are able to reunite the departed Souls of Men to their Bodies, after any given Time of Separation; This is, and must be, according to all our natural Notions, the incommunicable Prerogative of God. And so we see in Scripture

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ture, it is every where ascribed to him alone, even as a Thing that distinguishes him from all false Gods: See now, says he by the Mouth of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 19. *that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me; I kill and I make alive.* So 1 Sam. ii. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive; he bringeth down to the Grave and bringeth up.* And John v. 21, 26. *As the Father raiseth up the Dead and quickneth them, &c. As the Father hath Life in himself, &c. i. e.* is the Author and Spring of Life, and has the Power to impart it, not only by Creation, but by Resurrection also; as appears by the Context. And indeed (to make use of a very eminent Writer's Words, with a little or no Variation, because he was only proving the *Possibility* of the Resurrection) "Whoever so far reflects upon his own Being, as to acknowledge that he owes it to a superior Power, must needs think that the same Power, which gave Life to senseless Matter at first, and set all the Springs and Movements a going at the Beginning, can *alone* restore Life to a dead Body^a."

But, as Mr. Chubb has not thought fit to take any notice of this *Reunion* of the Soul

^a *The Trial of the Witnesses*, p. 65.

with the Body, in his Instance of *raising the Dead* (which, I am sorry to say, looks very suspicious, since the greatest Difficulty lies in it) I will go farther still, and even supposing with Mr. *Locke*^a, that it does not imply a Contradiction, that God may communicate to Matter the Power of thinking, and that consequently we are not *perhaps* composed of two distinct Natures, which is what the most Part of our modern Infidels believe or wish for, I will shew, that the same Argument, I have now insisted upon, holds still true, as thus: The Body of Man, disordered or dissolved by Death, thinks no more, at least I hope no one will be so extravagant as to suppose that it does; but the Moment it is raised, or restored to its original State, it begins to think again; and therefore the same Agent who raises it up, must at the same Time give it again the Power of Thinking, together with *Self-consciousness*, and the *Remembrance* of past Actions. Now to give, or give again (for it is all one) the Power of Thinking, is no doubt a Kind of Creation, since it is to bring into Existence a Thing that did not exist before; and does not Crea-

^a See his *Essay concerning human Understand.* B. iv. c. 3.
§ .6

tion suppose *Omnipotence*, and consequently belong to God alone? When Mr. *Locke* himself supposes, that Matter may possibly be rendered capable of thinking, (which, I am afraid, has done more Service to the Cause of Infidelity and Atheism, than he was aware of) he looks upon it as a very difficult Thing, which none but God can effect; for he expressly says ^a, that *the Power of thinking cannot be in any created Being, but merely by the good Pleasure and Bounty of the Creator*. And therefore, tho' we should admit his very precarious (to say no worse) Supposition, it would not follow, that Angels can by their own inherent Power raise the Dead.

But, in Support of the contrary Opinion, Mr. *Chubb* alledges the Instance of the *Egyptian Magicians*, who “ by their Enchantments, that is (as it is commonly understood) by a Power derived from evil Spirits, turned their *dead Rods* into *Serpents*, i. e. into *living active Beings*— And from hence, *says he*, it may be argued, that if an invisible created Agent could, by his own natural Ability, so change and dispose the Particles of Matter, which constituted a *dead Rod*, as that they became an organized Body, stored “ with

^a *Ibid.*

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

“ with Juices, in a proper Motion;— then
 “ there is a strong Probability, that it is
 “ within the inherent Power of some *creat-*
 “ *ed* Beings, to *rectify* the Disorders of an
 “ organized Body, *restore* to it a proper
 “ Quantity of Fluids, put them in *Motion*,
 “ and do what is farther necessary to render
 “ it again a *living, active Being*, after one,
 “ or two, or three Days Death; seeing the
 “ *latter* (as far as we can judge) is as *easy*
 “ to be performed as the *former*.”

Here is a plain Proof of the *Partiality* and
Unfairness of Mr. Chubb in treating his Sub-
 ject, which I have taken notice of before. He
 positively declares in his *Preface*, that he has
 considered it, *without any View or Regard to*
any particular Revelation, or to any particular
Miracle, wrought or supposed to be wrought in
Favour of the Divinity of any Revelation;
 and in his *third Section* he speaks thus: *As*
to any Light or Information, which may be
supposed to be derived from divine Revelation,
with respect to the present Question, that is
 NATURALLY and NECESSARILY *excluded*
out of the Case: And yet now he brings in
 an Instance out of the Scripture, to serve a
 very precarious *Hypothesis* of his own.

* Discourse on Miracles, P. 16, 17.

Moreover,

Moreover he knew very well, or should have known, that there are other Explications of this pretended Miracle of the *Magicians of Egypt*, besides that which he has followed, visibly in order to favour that Hypothesis; which *Explications* either overthrow the *Reality* of it, or suppose that if it were *real*, God himself was the Author of it: And this I shall have Occasion to examine by and by.

But to answer directly Mr. *Chubb's* wild Supposition, I observe farther, that whoever considers what constitutes *Life*, or the Nature of the *animal Oeconomy*, will soon see, that the Formation and Preservation of any organized Body requires an infinite Power to effect it. And here I beg Leave to transcribe some Observations of the ingenious Author of *the Enquiry into the Nature, &c. of the human Soul*. “ The Circulation of the
“ Blood, says he, is of itself a Work above
“ all the Power of Men, and even of Angels.
“ It is not performed upon mechanical Prin-
“ ciples, since it is impossible that the least
“ Particle of Matter be carried round in a
“ simple circular Motion, without the con-
“ stant Agency of an immaterial Power. But
“ if we apply this to the present Case of a
G “ circulating

“ circulating Fluid, where there is a Con-
 “ geries of Particles to be carried round, and
 “ consider, besides their constant Change of
 “ Direction, the Diminution of any Impulse
 “ impressed from the Action of these Parti-
 “ cles among themselves, by their mutual
 “ Illisions, Attrition, contrary and interfering
 “ Directions, and add to this the Irregula-
 “ rity and Intricacies of the Meanders they
 “ move in, differing inconceivably from the
 “ Simplicity of a circular Motion ; and last-
 “ ly, take in the vastly unequal Capacities of
 “ these Channels, and their endless Divisions
 “ and Branchings ;” (See p. 134, 135. of Vol.
 I.) we shall be convinced, that nothing less
 than an infinite Power is able to put the whole
 in Motion, and to preserve it any given Time.
 — “ We saw also just now the Necessity of
 “ the indefinient Action of the Power upon
 “ the Weight in any simple Machine ; but
 “ here there is an equal Necessity for the in-
 “ definient Action of an Infinity of Powers,
 “ (so to speak). It is not in any one Parti-
 “ cle, under the same constant Circum-
 “ stances, that the same Quantity of Motion
 “ is to be kept up, as in Machines that we
 “ know, but in every Part of this incon-
 “ ceivably complicated Piece of Mechanism,

“ under an endless Variety of Circumstances.
“ — If this were to be performed by the
“ Agency of finite immaterial Beings, we
“ cannot conceive, but that great Numbers
“ of them should be constantly busied in
“ maintaining the Circulation in one indivi-
“ dual Animal, considering the Variety of
“ the Work to be done, by different Means,
“ in all the different Parts of the Body, and
“ all to be carried on at the same Time.
“ The Fin of a Fish, or the Toe of a Frog,
“ or but a Part of these, would afford too
“ much Employment for a Creature that
“ can have but one thing under Considerati-
“ on at once, (p. 137, 138.)—But this Cir-
“ culation of the Blood is but one, though
“ a principal Branch of the Animal Oecono-
“ my ; for in the Brains, Nerves, Stomach,
“ Guts, Glands, in every Part there is Mo-
“ tion, and every Particle receives its im-
“ mediate Impulse from the Finger of Al-
“ mighty God.” (p. 139.)

Muscular Motion requires an infinite Pow-
er. The famous *Borelli* calculates, that when
a Man extends his Arm, and upon the Ex-
tremity of his four Fingers supports as great
a Weight as he can in that Posture ; the
Force that is exerted in the Muscles to sup-

port this Weight, is more than *seventy thousand Times* greater than the Weight itself, whatever this is, *De Mot. Anim.* Part I. Prop. 45. 82, 124. And if we proceed upon this Calculation, must not the Force display'd in all the Muscles of the Body, when a Man exerts all his Strength at once, be supposed *immense*, or such as we cannot without the greatest Absurdity, ascribe to any created Being? Moreover, there is in Animals, not only a *mechanical Motion*, which is performed without our Co-operation, or even Knowledge, and proceeds from *extra*; but also a *spontaneous Motion*, which is performed at our Will and Pleasure, and requires the actual Exercise of our *Will*, to be executed. But our *Will* does not, cannot depend on, or is not in the Power of any Being, besides God, no more than the immaterial Substance which it belongs to, or at least the Faculty of Thinking which it supposes, as was shewn before. And so, under what View soever we consider the Nature and constituent Parts of the *Animal Oeconomy*, we cannot ascribe the *Restoration* of it, after a *total Cessation* and *Dissolution*, to any other Cause but to him that contrived it, and formed it at first, and whose Power is incessantly exerted in the
 Preserva-

Preservation of it. What other besides this infinite Being, can reasonably be supposed to have in himself, and of himself, a sufficient Capacity to perform the various Actions on which our Life depends, and to set the Springs of it a-going again? And what *Madness* is it (for I cannot give it a better Name) to imagine that Angels, and even Men are, or may be able to do all this?

I have dwelt the longer upon this Subject, because in the general Opinion of Mankind, the raising of the Dead is the most stupendous, and, at the same Time, the most palpable of all Miracles; so stupendous that *Pliny* reckons it among the *Impossibilities* which God himself cannot do^a; and therefore it particularly concerns us to clear it from the Difficulties with which Infidels would fain perplex it; and more so, as our Saviour's own Resurrection is the main Proof of his divine Mission; which it can never be, as long as we are not certain that either Angels or Men have in themselves, or of their own Nature, the Power of raising the Dead.

The last Kind of *Miracles of the Matter*, *The Knowledge of* which I have mentioned, is that of *discover-* *Men's*

^a Nat. Hist. Lib. ii. Cap. 7.

*Minds or
inward
Thoughts,
by mere In-
tuition,
which
Christ so
often dis-
played, is
in the
Power of
God alone.*

*ing Men's inward Thoughts and Reasonings,
and searching their Hearts.* This is so pecu-
liar a Property or Prerogative of God, that
I hope Mr. Chubb will not be so *romantick* as
to attribute it also to Angels. For to know
what passes in Men's Minds by *mere Intuition*,
or without any Means whatsoever, without any
outward Sign discovering it, is certainly above
the natural Capacity of a created Being; God
alone knows it, and can know it, after this
Manner. And that *Christ* also knew it in
the same Manner, is plain from the Places
above-cited, especially from *John ii. 23, 24,*
25. wherein it is said, that *Jesus did not com-
mit himself unto many that believed in his
Name, because he knew all Men; And needed
not that any should testify of Man, for he
knew what was in Man.* And he himself
declares, *Rev. ii. 23. All the Churches shall
know that I am he which searcheth the Reins
and Hearts.* Which Words plainly suppose
or intimate, that there is but one Being that
possesses this Privilege. And indeed, it is al-
ways attributed in Scripture to God alone:
*Thou, even thou only, knowest the Hearts of all
the Children of Men,* says *Solomon* in his
Prayer at the Dedication of the Temple:
And God himself speaks thus by the Prophet
Jeremy, Ch. xvii. 9, 10. The Heart is deceitful
above

above all Things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins, even to give every Man according to his Ways, and according to the Fruit of his Doings; intimating, that he only does, and can do it, and annexing this Property to that of supreme Judge of Mankind, which surely can never belong to any mere Creature.

To this divine Knowledge, which so visibly appeared in our Saviour, we may add that of *future Contingencies*, no less conspicuous in his many Predictions which were exactly fulfilled; especially that of his own Resurrection, to which he so often appealed before his Death, as the most convincing Proof of his divine Mission. For this being in itself a great Miracle, or, as I have shewn, an Operation which entirely depended on the sole arbitrary Will of God, could not be known in a *natural Way*; and therefore the Prediction of it must have been supernatural, and truly miraculous. And here we have most clearly the *Condition* so much insisted on by Mr. Chubb, viz. that *the Person who works a Miracle, or in Favour of whom it is wrought, do foreknow and foretel that such an Effect will take place*: For though I have shewn before, that this is not necessary to constitute a true

As likewise that of future Contingencies.

Miracle, yet I have at the same Time acknowledged (and it is not to be denied) that where it is found, it affords a new Degree of Evidence; not only because it enables Men to provide against Fraud and Imposture, and shews that the Effect foretold, is not the Production of Chance, as I have already observed; but because it visibly implies a divine Knowledge, which cannot be questioned, when the Event comes to pass. That the Knowledge of the Angels, vastly surpasses ours, and that by their natural Abilities, and long Experience and Observation, they may foresee many Events in the common Course of Things, nobody can doubt; but does it follow, that therefore they can foreknow *with Certainty* mere *Contingencies*, i. e. Events which entirely depend upon the arbitrary Will of Men, and much less those that depend upon the Will of God, in the Course of his extraordinary Dispensations? No, Reason tells us, that such a Foreknowledge supposes *Omniscience*, and must belong to him only, who has created the Mind of Man, and is the great Governor both of the moral and natural World. And indeed it is what he claims in *Holy Scripture*, as the distinctive Attribute of the Deity, in Opposition to all false Gods.

Produce

Produce your Cause, saith the Lord (to them, *Isaiah xli. 21, &c.*) bring forth your strong Reasons, saith the King of Jacob. Let them bring them forth, and shew us what shall happen,—or declare us Things for to come. Shew the Things that are to come hereafter, THAT WE MAY KNOW THAT YE ARE GODS. But to proceed :

The MIRACLES OF THE MANNER comprehend all those wonderful Cures recorded in the Gospel, which *perhaps* might have been effected by natural Means, but were performed without any Means at all, or by such Means as were utterly unfit, or rather an Obstacle to them. I say, that they might *perhaps* have been effected by natural Means, because I have mentioned some under this Head, about which I am in some doubt : Such is the Cure of the *Leprosy*, which was thought among the *Jews* to be inflicted immediately by God himself, and not to be removed but by him^a; witness what the King

The Miracles of the Manner required also an Almighty Power to perform them.

^a The *Jews* themselves, says Dr. Hammond upon *Matt. viii. 4.* confess, that *Leprosy* is the Finger of God, a Disease peculiarly of his sending and removing, and that it is not lawful for the Physician (or any but the Priest by God appointed and directed in his Course) so much as to attempt the Cure of it. Thus saith R. Menachem, in *Levit. xiii.* And therefore in the Answer to John Baptist's Question, whether Christ were the

King of *Israel* said, when he received a Letter which the King of *Syria* wrote to him, to beg that he would cure *Naaman* of his Leprosy. He had no sooner read it, but he rent his Clothes and said, *Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this Man doth send unto me to recover a Man of his Leprosy^b?* But yet, I am not certain that this Malady is naturally incurable. Such is again, the Cure of the Man born blind, John ix. Natural Blindness has always been reckoned among the incurable Diseases: *Since the World began, said the Man himself to the Pharisees, it was not heard that a Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind.* And many of those who had been Eye-witnesses of this Miracle, or had heard of it, supposed that it was even above the Power of superior invisible Beings. *Can a Devil open the Eyes of the Blind?* answered they to some evil-minded People, who being displeased at our Saviour's Speech about the good Shepherd, openly accused him of being possessed with a Devil that made him talk after that Manner^c. But whether natural the Messiah or no, one Part of it is, that the Lepers are cleansed; that being as peculiar an Act of God's, as that the Dead are raised in the following Words, Matt. xi. 5. For this Reason we find no where in the Old, nor in the New Testament, that Leprosy was ever cured by Physick, or any natural Means.

^b 2 Kings v. 7.^c John x. 20, 21.

ral Blindness proceeds from some particular Disorder contracted in the Womb, which might be removed (if known) by the Art of Men, or at least of superior Agents, or from some essential Defect, or want of Organs in the Eyes, which no Art of Men or Angels can supply, because it requires a *creative Power*, I will not take upon me to determine. And this is the Reason why I thought it better to range these Cures in the Class of the *Miracles of the Manner*.

For admitting they were, like all the rest, performable by natural Means, yet were they no less *miraculous*, considering the Manner in which they were effected, infinitely above all the Power of Men and Angels. If Men can remove most of the Diseases which afflict human Nature, there is no doubt but Angels may do it much better still, in much less Time, and with much more Success. But carry their Skill and their Power in that Respect, as far as you please; say that they are able to cure *all manner* of Diseases *radically*, and in *a very short Time*, which is the utmost you can suppose; I ask, Can they do this *without any Means at all*, by the mere Efficacy of their own Will, and *in an Instant*? For our Saviour's Cures were performed after this Manner. I shall not repeat here what I have

have already said about it ^d, in order to shew that this way of Acting is peculiar to God: But whoever will consider the Thing seriously, must soon be convinced that a created Spirit cannot act upon external Objects without a *Medium*, much less in the greatest Recesses, and smallest Vessels and Particles of the human Body, without *Means* or *Instruments*; that the *Use* of Means or Instruments must take up *some Time*, let the Agility and Dexterity of the Spirit that employs them be ever so great; and that though he might, by the Application of proper Remedies, remove all Diseases, yet he cannot do it in such a Manner, as that the Diseased recover, *in an Instant*, all their former Strength and Vigour, as we see in our Saviour's Cures. No sooner had the Fever left *Peter's* Mother at his Command, but *she arose, and ministered unto them*, or waited upon him and his Disciples ^a: The very Moment he said to the *impotent Man* at the Pool of *Bethesda*, *Rise, take up thy Bed and walk*; the Man *was made whole, and took up his Bed, and went Home* ^b: which shewed that he had recovered *at once* a perfect Health and Strength, as much as if he had not been sick at all, though he had lain under so great an *Infirmity* for thirty-

^d P. 51, &c.^a Matt. viii. 15.^b John v. 8, 9.

eight Years, so that he never could in all that Time, for want of sufficient Strength, step down into the Pool, notwithstanding he came there constantly at the Return of the Season; which *long Infirmary* must of Course have worn him out, and reduced him very low. To restore such a Man, in an Instant, to a perfect State of Health and Vigour, no less, I apprehend, than an infinite Power is requisite; because it cannot be effected with all the Art and Skill imaginable, even of the most exalted Angel, but *by Degrees*, and *in Time*. I might add several other Instances, but these (together with what has been said before) may suffice to shew, that the *Manner* in which *Christ* performed his various Cures, was *above* the Power of any created Being, and therefore *truly miraculous*, in the Sense I contend for.

The last Kind of our Saviour's Miracles are those both OF THE MATTER AND MANNER, or that are to be accounted *such*, in both these Respects; and to this Class I have referred all the Cures of *Demoniacs*; or of Persons represented as being possessed by the Devil. It is not my Business to enquire here whether they were really so; I take it for granted, and I believe I may safely do it till better Reasons can be alledged to the contrary

Those both of the Matter and the Manner were no less visibly the Works of God alone. This fully made out in the particular Case of the Cure of the Demoniacs.

trary, than those hitherto offered. Supposing therefore the Reality of those *Possessions*, I ask, Is it in the Power of any created Spirit or Angel, so to dispose of other inferior Spirits, as to force them out of, or hinder them from acting upon a Body, which they have for some Time been absolute Masters of? The *Pharisees*, it is true, accused our Saviour of *casting out Devils by Beelzebub*, the *Prince of the Devils*^a; but does it follow that *Beelzebub* had in fact such a Power? No, no more than that he actually exerted it, the Absurdity of which *Christ* himself immediately shewed them by an unanswerable Argument. This was but a malicious Supposition of theirs, without any manner of Foundation, to discredit his Miracles. St. *Jude* and St. *John* speak of a Dispute or Battle between good and bad Angels, in which the first prevailed^b; but I hope this is not to be taken literally, except it be in a *Poem*, such as *Milton's*; and if it were, it would be no sufficient Proof that some Angels have a natural inherent Power of casting out Devils. In short, it is not easy to be conceived that any created Spirit or Angel can have such an *absolute* Authority or Influence, or act so *immediately* and powerfully over evil Spirits, as

^a Matt. xii. 24.^b Jud. v. 9. Rev. xii. 7.

to drive them *at Pleasure*, and *against their Will*, out of the Bodies which they had taken Possession of. This, in my Opinion is, and must be the Prerogative of the great God, *the Father of all Spirits*.

But the *Manner* in which our Saviour performed this *Kind of Miracle*, was no less above the Power of all Angels to effect, than the *Miracle* itself. For, consider to what a wretched Condition the Devil had reduced those that were possessed by him, depriving them of the Use of their very Reason and Senses, rendering them dumb and blind, tormenting them with the most violent convulsive Motions, in a manner tearing them to Pieces, and casting them into the Fire, and into the Waters; Consider how *Christ* cured them all *perfectly*, in a *Moment*, by a *Word of Command only*, by visibly forcing out of their Bodies the evil Spirits, which openly acknowledged his divine Mission, and the absolute Authority he had over them. Consider all this, I say, and judge whether such a Work as this was not above the natural Power of all created Angels. The same Reasons that have been before alledged with respect to the *Miracles of the Matter*, will prove it undeniably; and to these I shall, to avoid Repetitions, refer the Reader. Let me only ob-
serve,

serve, by way of Confirmation or Illustration, that *casting out Devils* is constantly represented in the Gospel, as the greatest and most astonishing Miracle, as what particularly distinguish'd our Saviour from all other Prophets, and shewed him to be the Son of God. When he had healed a Man that had an *unclean Spirit*, in the Synagogue of *Capernaum*, it is said, that *the People were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves saying, What Thing is this? What new Doctrine is this? for with Authority commandeth he, even the unclean Spirits, and they do obey him^a*. And upon such another Occasion, *the Multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel^b*.

None but Christ and his Disciples ever had or exercised the Power of casting out Devils; And what is said about Exorcisms being in use among the Jews, has no Manner of Foundation.

And indeed, we find no Instance in the Scriptures, of Devils being cast out, before the coming of *Christ*, nor since his coming but in his Name, and by his Power. For as to the supposed Practice of exorcising evil Spirits, among the *Jews*, about our Saviour's Time, nothing is more uncertain; or rather it will appear entirely groundless, if we consider the before-mentioned Amazement of the People, and their Declaration that *it was never so seen in Israel*. How could they be so much astonish'd at *Jesus* casting the Devils, and

^a Mark i. 27.

^b Matt. ix. 33.

be so positive, that nothing like it had ever been seen before, if this was customary among them, or even if they had but one or two Instances of it? And it is remarkable, that the *Pharisees* themselves, who did what they could to depreciate this particular kind of our Saviour's Miracles, and were perfectly well acquainted with their own Customs, never objected to him any thing like it, but constantly ascribed his casting out the Devils, to the Power of the Prince of the Devils himself. Had the Thing been usual among them, they would no doubt have said, that what he did was nothing extraordinary, and no more proved his divine Authority, than the Dispossession of their own *Exorcists* did prove that they were sent from God. His asking them, *By whom do your Sons cast them out?* is no Argument that they did actually do it; they only pretended to such a Power, for since the *Babylonish* Captivity, that People were much addicted to *Magic-Arts* and Incantations, among which this of casting out Devils was probably one; and therefore our Saviour argues with them, *ad hominem*, upon their own false Principles and Pretensions, though they themselves were so well satisfied of the Vanity of them, that they

H did

did not draw from thence any Objection against his divine Power.

Josephus is the first Author we know of, that speaks of *Exorcisms* among the *Jews*²; but the Account he gives of their Origin and Manner of Performance, is so ridiculous, and favours so much of Superstition, that no Credit is to be given to it. “*Solomon*, says he, “left behind him *Forms of Conjuraton* in “writing, so effectual against evil Spirits, “that they fly before them, without ever “daring to return; which way of Remedy “is much in request with our People to this “Day.” And what were these *Forms of Conjuraton*, according to him? Not to exorcise simply, and without any particular Ceremony, *in the Name of the God of Abraham, of the God of Isaac, and of the God of Jacob*, as *Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and Origen* are generally thought to affirm that the *Jews* used to do; but he gives us a *Specimen* of it in a Story which is visibly of his own making. “I saw, says he, one *Eleazar*, a Country- “man of mine, dispossessing of People in the “Presence of *Vespasian* and his Sons, Officers and Soldiers: And his way was this; “he applied a Ring to the Nostrils of the Per-

² Arch. L. viii. c. 2.

“ son possessed, with a Piece of a Root conveyed under the Seal of it, being a Secret of *Solomon's*. The Demoniac did but smell to it, and the Devil was drawn out by the Nose. The Spirit threw the Man down; but *Eleazar* adjured it never to trouble him any more, making frequent mention of *Solomon's* Name, (*not of God's Name*) in the Time of the Operation, and reciting Charms and Incantations of his Invention. *Eleazar* after this was willing to shew the Company a *Master-piece*; so he set a Cup, or a Bason of Water, at a little Distance from a Man that was possessed, and adjured the Devil to overturn this Bason at his leaving the Man, as a Token to the Company that he had quitted him. This being done, no body doubted of the admirable Knowledge and Wisdom of *Solomon*^a. Can any Man of Sense upon such an absurd silly Narrative as this, believe that it was customary among the *Jews* to cast out Devils? Whoever considers it attentively, will be inclined to think, with the famous *Van Dale*, that *Josephus's* View in writing these Fables, was to make the World believe, that there was nothing supernatural or divine, in the frequent Dispossessions per-

^a *Ibid.* Sir Roger L'Estrange's Translation.

formed by our Saviour and his Disciples^a. We find indeed in *the Acts of the Apostles*^b, mention made of some *Jews Exorcists*, who took upon them to cast out Devils in the Name of *Jesus*; but the Description which *St. Luke* gives of them, and their Success, shews that they were but mere Pretenders, who by their Conjurations imposed upon poor ignorant People; for he calls them *Vagabonds*, *Strollers* and *arrant Cheats*, and says, that far from dispossessing an evil Spirit, whom they undertook to cast out, he despised them, fell upon them, and cruelly beat them, so that they *ran away naked and wounded*.

As to the Passages alledged out of the Fathers, in support of the contrary Opinion, they are very little to the Purpose. *Justin Martyr* speaks dubiously, and only by Supposition: *If any of you [Jews] says he^c, do exorcise Devils in the Name of the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, perhaps they will obey you*. What *Irenæus* affirms, that *by the Invocation of the Name of God, even before the Advent of our Lord, Men were saved from evil Spirits, and*

^a See his *Dissertationes de Origine & Progressu Idololatriæ*, pag. 519. ^b Acts xix. 13, &c. ^c Dial. cum Tryph.

p. 311.

all Kinds of Dæmons^a, does not clearly import actual Dispossessions: It may mean no more than this, that by Prayer, good Men were preserved from the Wiles and Power of the Devil, which no body will deny. *Ori-gen* is indeed more positive, for he tells us^b, that *the Name of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Jacob, being used by the Jews in the Incantation of Devils, did great Miracles*; but how did he know this, since he liv'd long after *Justin Martyr* and *Irenæus*, whose Words about it are far from being exprefs? And supposing they were, they would only prove that these Fathers, without any further Enquiry, took the Thing for granted either upon common Report, or upon *Josephus's* Account of it, and their mistaking the Texts of the *New Testament* before-mentioned; for it does not appear that they had, or could have, any Authority for it; and it is well worth Notice, that in the *Talmud of Jerusalem*, which was compiled, as is generally supposed, about the latter End of the *second*, or the beginning of the *third* Century, there is not the least Intimation of any *Exorcisms*, or real Dispossessions of Devils among the *Jews*, before our Saviour's Time, though one would

^a L. ii. c. 5.

^b Cont. Cels.

naturally expect it, if there had been any such thing, especially in the Places where his Miracles, and particularly his casting out Devils, are ascribed to a Kind of *Magic*, or to his having stolen out of the Temple, or brought with him from *Egypt* the right Pronunciation of the *Tetrogrammaton*, or the true Name of God, and clapped it between the Skin and the Flesh of his Thigh; and by that means obtained the Power of working all his Wonders, which, they say, any Man else might do, that could pronounce that Name aright. And therefore I may safely conclude, that the casting out Devils was a Work entirely peculiar to *Christ*, and his Apostles, and reckoned among the *Jews* to be a most stupendous Miracle, and a distinguishing Character of the *Messiah*. I shall quote but two Passages more, out of the Gospel to this Purpose. St. *Matthew* says^a, that in consequence of *Jesus's* healing one that was possessed with a Devil, blind and dumb, all the People were amazed and said, *Is not this the Son of David?* i. e. the *Messiah*. And St. *Luke* tells us^b, that when the seventy Disciples, whom *Christ* had sent to preach the Gospel about *Judea*, came to him

^a Matt. xii. 23.^b x. 17.

again,

again, they returned with Joy, saying, Lord, EVEN the Devils are subject unto us through thy Name. They looked upon it, as the highest Pitch of miraculous Power; and the Reason of it is plain, viz. because, according to our Apprehension of Things; it is much more difficult to command invisible spiritual Beings, and dispose of them at Pleasure, than to act in an extraordinary Manner, upon visible material Objects. I say according to our apprehension of Things; for as in my Hypothesis all Miracles proceed from God alone, they must be all alike easy, there can be neither greater nor lesser, since they are the Productions of his mere arbitrary Will and Command.

But before I dismiss this Examination of our Saviour's Miracles, as being *all* of them above the Power of Angels to perform, I hope I may be allowed to say something of the Gift of Tongues, which he conferred on his Apostles. As he had no Opportunity to exercise this miraculous Power, so it is no wonder if we have no Instances of it in the Gospels; and therefore it did not properly belong to the above *Enumeration*. But nevertheless it is plain, that he was possessed with it, since he could not impart to others a Faculty

Particular Observations concerning the Gift of Tongues, which tho' not exercised by, yet proceeded from Christ.

which he himself had not. And that he really imparted to his Disciples this Gift of Tongues, appears from his Promise to them just before his Departure; *and these Signs shall follow them that believe; in my Name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues^a. In my Name, i. e. By a Power derived from me, and by calling upon me.* John truly baptized with Water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many Days hence.—And ye shall receive Power, i. e. the Power of working all Miracles, and consequently the Gift of Tongues which was to attend it, *after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you^b*. Accordingly the Apostles, but ten Days after this Promise, *were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began, upon the Spot, to speak with other Tongues, i. e. with Tongues different from their Mother-tongue, and which they had never learnt, to the Number of fifteen or sixteen, as the Spirit gave them Utterance^c*. Now is it at all probable, that Angels can by their own natural Power, work such a Miracle as this? Can they have an immediate Communication with, and Action upon the Mind of Man at Pleasure? This is inconceivable; and, as far, as we are able to judge, must be

^a Mark xvi. 17.^b Acts i. 4, 8.^c *Ibid.* ii. 4.

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the peculiar Prerogative of God. But supposing they had such a Power, can they also *infuse* into the Mind *at once* the Knowledge of *many* foreign Languages; and, without any Means at all, or any Application on Man's part, dispose both his Memory and his Organs, so as to enable him to speak them well, and fluently, at all Times and upon all Occasions. They might perhaps do with him, as the Lord is said to have done with *Balaam's* As^a, make use of his Organs, to utter through them those several Languages, as Opportunity should offer; but then he would, like that As, be a mere *passive* Being, and speak foreign Tongues quite *mechanically*; whereas it is plain, that the Apostles *understood* what they spoke in any Language, and framed their own Discourses, adapting them to the various Circumstances of Times, and Places, and Persons. And after all, is not this wonderful Effect expressly ascribed in Scripture to the *Holy Ghost*, as to its immediate Cause? Why then should we refer it to Angels? Is the Spirit of God also at the Disposal of any inferior Spirit? Who does not see the Absurdity of such a Supposition, and consequently, the Necessity of acknowledg-

^a Numb. xxii.

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ing that this Miracle was visibly *above* the natural inherent Power of *all* created Beings? Especially if we consider, that the Apostles did not only receive this supernatural Gift, and enjoy it constantly all their Lives; but moreover received at the same Time the Power of conferring it on others, in like Manner, and did actually confer it on great Numbers of *Christians*. Was not this God's *own doing*? And could it possibly proceed but from the great Fountain of all Power and Knowledge?

Miracles every where represented in Scripture, as the immediate Work of God; and an absolute Proof of a divine Mission.

Having thus fully proved that *all* the Miracles of our Saviour, or his Disciples, were *above* the natural inherent Power of any created Being, I shall proceed to shew, that *Miracles* are all along represented in Scripture, as the immediate Work of God, and a proper and sufficient Attestation of a DIVINE MISSION, which they can never be, if Angels, either good or bad, can of themselves, or by their own natural Ability perform them. In the ivth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *Moses* expressly ascribes to God all the Wonders done in favour of the *Israelites*, and proposes them as a clear Demonstration of his being the only true God. *Ask now*, says he to the People, *of the Days that are past, which were before thee,*

thee, since the Day that God created Man upon the Earth, and ask from the one Side of Heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such Thing, as this great Thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever People bear the Voice of God, speaking out of the Midst of the Fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God essayed to go and take him a Nation from the midst of another Nation, by Temptations, by Signs, and by Wonders.—
 Unto thee it was shewed, THAT THOU MIGHTEST KNOW THAT THE LORD HE IS GOD, THERE IS NONE ELSE BESIDES HIM.

Immediately after the *Israelites* had entered the Land of *Canaan*, and upon their going to besiege *Jericho*, the Lord appeared to *Joshua*, and gave him Assurances of his miraculous Assistance and Support, and particular Directions for the taking of that City. It is said, that as he was in the Plain before it, where he probably went in order to *reconnoitre* the Place, and consider the proper Means to make himself Master of it; he saw at a Distance, a Person in the Shape of a Warrior, standing over-against him, with a drawn Sword in his Hand. Not knowing, nor even suspecting who it could be, he resolutely advanced, and asked him of what Party

This shewn in the particular Instances of Joshua.

Party he was, whether for him, or against him; when the Vision replied, *As Captain of the Host of the Lord am I now come*, "to
 " be the Leader and Guardian of thy Peo-
 " ple, to fight for them, and put them in
 " full Possession of the Land of *Canaan*,
 " by the greatest Miracles and Wonders;" as plainly appears from the following Chapter, and the Sequel of this History^a. There are several Things in this Account, which clearly shew, that the Person who appeared to *Joshua* was a *divine*, and not a *created* Being. *First*, The Title of *Captain of the Host of the Lord* is applicable to none but God himself, who is often represented in Scripture under that Image, and expressly called the *Lord of Hosts*; or to *Christ*, the second Person of the *Holy Trinity*, whom the Apostle styles *the Captain of our Salvation*, (Heb. ii. 10.) and indeed we no where find it given to any Angel or Man. *Secondly*, *Joshua* relating the Instructions which this Person gave him concerning the taking of *Jericho*, calls him *Jehovah*, (chap. vi. 1.) the incommunicable Name of God, as I have already observed. *Thirdly*, He no sooner hears that it was *the Captain of the Lord's Host*, but he falls down

^a Jos. v. 13, &c.

on his Face, and worships him; which he would never have done, if that Person had been but a *created* Angel; much less would the Angel himself have suffered it, but would certainly have reprov'd *Joshua*, as one of them did St. *John* for the very same Thing, *Revel. xxii. 10.* *Fourthly*, This extraordinary Person uses the same Language as that who spake to *Moses* from the burning Bush, and so seems to be the same individual Being, *Loose thy Shoe from off thy Foot, for the Place whereon thou standest is holy.* I have shewn before, that it was a *divine* Person that appeared to *Moses*; and therefore this here must be a *divine* Person also. *Fifthly*, The Command he gives to *Joshua*, to *loose his Shoe from off his Foot*, imports a religious Homage, and a very profound one, peculiarly appropriated among *Eastern Nations* to the supreme Being; and the Reason of it, *for the Place whereon thou standest is holy*, supposes God to be there present in a very particular, extraordinary Manner. A learned *Rabbi* understanding by *the Host of the Lord*, the Host of Angels, says, *that this Angel who suffered himself to be worshipped, and by whose Presence the Place where he appeared was sanctified, so that Joshua was commanded to put off*
his

his Shoes, no doubt, was the very same whom all the Angels of Heaven do worship. Job. à Coch. upon the Gemara of the Sanhedrin, Vol. III. Dissert. II.

And indeed, all the Miracles which were afterwards performed in *Joshua's* Life-time, are by him expressly referred to God, as to their first and immediate Cause, especially that of the Sun and Moon standing still at his Request; which was the most stupendous of all, and I am sure, *infinitely above* the natural Power of Angels. For this could not be done, without either stopping, at the same Time, the Course of all the heavenly Bodies, or rendering the Earth immoveable against the immense irresistible Impulse of *Attraction* and *Gravitation*, or of any other Cause of its *diurnal* and *annual* Motion. But as far as we are able to judge, an infinite Power appears to have been equally requisite in both Cases; since to alter the original Order of Things, in the visible World, to put a stop to the various Motions of the whole *Solar System*, or of any Part of it, without overturning it, and *even* without the *least* Confusion (in which the greatness of the Miracle chiefly consists) no less a Power is necessary, than that which disposed it at first, and set it a-going.

a-going. If Angels were, of themselves, able to do this, they might as well be supposed able to have created the World, or arranged it, and put it in Motion, as we see it now; and then all the Arguments for the Existence of God, *à posteriori* (which in my humble Opinion, are the best, and the fittest to convince the Generality of Mankind) would signify just nothing. But to proceed:

When God made Choice of *Gideon*, to deliver his People, and sent his Angel to acquaint him with it, it is remarked, that *Gideon* desired to have a *Sign*, or a miraculous Proof of his Mission, which was immediately granted. And after he had by a divine Order and Impulse destroyed the Altar of *Baal*, and built another to the God of *Israel*, he summon'd the People to go with him, and fight the *Midianites*. But being willing to satisfy them, probably as well as himself, that he was really appointed by Heaven to be their Leader; he begged of God to work two Miracles, the second of which was contrary to, or an Inversion of the first; so that they could not entertain the least doubt of his being sent by him: And accordingly these

two

two Miracles were performed upon the Spot, not by an *Angel*, but by *God* himself, as it is expressly said^a. That the Person who first appeared to *Gideon*, was not a mere created Angel, is plain from the incommunicable name *Jehovah*, given him no less than six or seven Times in this very Narration; from his Discourse to him, which becomes none but God; *And the Lord looked upon him and said, Go in this thy Might, and thou shalt save Israel from the Hands of the Midianites; have not I sent thee?* from the Fear *Gideon* was in, when he perceived that it was a *divine* Person that spoke to him, according to the prevailing Notion in those early Times, that *no Man could see God, and live.* (See *Exod. xx. 19. Judg. xiii. 22. &c.*) And this, by the by, shews that *Gideon* thought that God himself had appeared unto him; which made him break out into this Exclamation, addressing himself to that Person, *Alas, O Lord God!* And lastly, from this Person's Answer. *And the Lord (JEHOVAH) said unto him, Peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die;* and *Gideon's* Behaviour upon it, *He built an Altar there unto the Lord, and called it JEHOVAH-SHALLOM, or*

^a See *Judg. v.*

God is my Peace, in Commemoration of this gracious Interview. It is very observable, that the *Jews* themselves in their *Targum*, stile the Person who thus appeared to him, the WORD OF THE LORD, the SHECHINA, i.e. God's *Habitation* or *Glory*, the most august Symbol of his particular Presence. If the sacred Historian, and *Gideon* himself call him *the Angel of the Lord*, it is by way of Pre-eminence, and with respect to his Office, as has been observed before, taking him for the uncreated *Angel of the Covenant*, the *Son of God* himself. And thus it plainly appears, that the same *divine* Person who revealed himself to *Moses* from the burning Bush, led the *Israelites* in the Column of Fire through the Wilderness, brought them into the Land of Promise, fought their Battles, delivered them when oppressed, was properly their Captain and their Leader, and worked all the Miracles done in their Favour by the Hands of *Moses*, and other Prophets that came after him; that this Person, I say, was no other than the very *Son of God*, the second Person of the *Blessed Trinity*; and that therefore Angels had no Share in them, nor ought to be consider'd as the Authors of them.

Of Samu-
el.

No sooner had the *Israelites* got a King of their own chusing, who signalized the Beginning of his Reign by a memorable Victory over the *Ammonites*, but *Samuel* fearing lest they should, now they were at the height of their Wishes, forget God's Blessings, and the Crime they had committed in rejecting his immediate Government, address'd himself to them with a most pathetick Speech upon the Subject; and to convince them that he was directed in it by a divine Impulse, he told them ^a, *Now therefore stand and see that great Thing which the Lord will do before your Eyes. Is it not Wheat Harvest to Day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send Thunder and Rain; that ye may perceive and see that your Wickedness is great, which ye have done in the Sight of the Lord, in asking you a King.* The Miracle consisted, not in the *Thunder* and *Rain*, which are natural Things, but in that it was then *Harvest*, at which Time it never thunder'd and rained in *Judea*, but only in *Autumn* and *Spring*, from whence came the Expression of the *former and latter Rain*, so frequent in Scripture. And therefore a Storm of *Thunder* and *Rain* at that Season of the Year, was

^a 1 Sam. xii. 16, &c.

contrary to the common Course of Things in that Country, and a true Miracle. For, without enquiring here whether such an Effect as this, could be performed by any superior invisible Agent, besides God, which *perhaps* is not so easy to determine, though for my own Part, I am pretty well satisfied that it could not under the fore-mentioned Circumstances; it is plain that both *Samuel* and the *Jews* looked upon it as the immediate Work of God, it happening upon that Prophet's Prayer to him, and according to his express Prediction. *So Samuel called unto the Lord, and the Lord sent Thunder and Rain that very Day; and all the People greatly feared the Lord and Samuel; the Lord as the Author of the Miracle, who therein gave them a Proof that he could in an Instant, and when they least expected it, deprive them of all the Comforts of Life, and severely punish them for their Rejection of him; and Samuel as his Minister, to whose Voice they were to hearken. And therefore they apply to him for the Removal of this particular Plague, and the averting of all other Judgments which God might justly inflict upon them: And all the People said unto Samuel, Pray for thy Servants unto the Lord thy God,*

that we die not ; for we have added unto all our Sins this Evil, to ask us a King.

We read of *Elijah*^b, that having restored
Of Elijah. the Widow of *Zarephtha's* Son to Life, she immediately said to him, *Now BY THIS I KNOW that thou art a Man of God, or a Prophet, and that the Word of the Lord in thy Mouth is Truth.* Which shews, that she thought undoubted Miracles to be a sufficient and direct Proof of a divine Mission. And well she might look upon *Elijah* as a true Prophet, after such a Wonder as this, and the miraculous Increase of her Meal and Oil, performed a little before ; both which required a creative Power, as has been shewn above, and consequently were not within the natural Ability of Angels. But there is another very remarkable Instance to the same Purpose, in the Account of that Prophet's Life and Miracles, which I beg Leave to insist upon. Having upbraided King *Ahab* and all the People with their abominable Idolatry in mixing the Worship of *Baal* with that of *JEHOVAH*, he proposed to determine which of the two was the true God, by applying, he to *Jehovah*, and the Priests of *Baal* to

^b 1 Kings xvii.

their Deity, for a Miracle in Confirmation of it. *And Elijah came unto all the People* (gathered upon Mount Carmel for that Purpose) *and said, How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.——Let Baal's Prophets, therefore, give us two Bulls, and let them choose one for themselves, and cut it in Pieces, and lay it on Wood, and put no Fire under: And I will dress the other Bullock, and lay it on Wood, and put no Fire under. And call ye on the Name of your Gods, and I will call on the Name of the Lord. And the GOD THAT ANSWERETH BY FIRE,* (i. e. by sending Fire from Heaven, and consuming in an Instant the Victim, as appears by the Sequel) *LET HIM BE GOD. And all the People answered and said, It is well spoken^a.* Here we see *Elijah* supposing, as an universally received Maxim, that Miracles are a proper and an unquestionable Proof of the Truth of a Doctrine, for the Confirmation of which they are visibly performed: And so it appears to be from the People readily and unanimously agreeing to this Proposal. Accordingly, the Priests of *Baal* first prepared their Sacrifice, and called upon their God from Morning till Evening, but all to no

^a *Ibid.* xviii.

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

Purpose. And then, *Elijah* having repaired an Altar of the Lord, which stood there, and had been broken down, laid his Bullock on the Wood, made a large Trench round it, and ordered such a Quantity of Water to be poured over the Sacrifice and the Wood, that the Trench was filled, and the whole overflowed with it. This being done, he approached the Altar about the Time that the *Evening-Sacrifice* was used to be offered to God in the Temple, and put up this most remarkable Prayer, *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this Day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy Servant, and that I have done all these Things at thy Word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, THAT THIS PEOPLE MAY KNOW that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their Heart back again, or more clearly, that their Heart may be turned back again, or converted unto thee.* And no sooner had *Elijah* ended speaking, but a Fire fell down from Heaven, which *in an Instant*, not only consumed the burnt Sacrifice and the Wood, but calcinated the very Stones of which the Altar was built, and dried up all the Water that covered it, or was about it. So that *when all the People saw this Miracle, they fell*
on

*on their Faces and said, The Lord (JEHOVAH),
he is the God, the Lord, he is the God, i. e.
the only true God^a.*

Now, what plainer Instance can one desire, to shew that *Miracles* prove, independently of all other Circumstances, and afford a sufficient Evidence of a divine Mission and a divine Interposal? For it is manifest from *Elijah's* Prayer, and the whole Context, that this was *the Lord's doing*: And indeed the very Nature of the Work itself shews, that it could not be performed by any other Being. I do not deny that it may be possible for superior invisible Agents, either good or bad, to manage Meteors and Exhalations, so as to make Fire descend from the Clouds or the Air; but this was such a Fire, as I am sure, Nature and all natural Powers cannot afford. Thunder or Lightning itself, the quickest, hottest, and most penetrating of all Fires, could never have produced the before-mentioned Effect, not only to dry up *in an Instant*, a very large Quantity of Water, but to burn to Ashes the very Earth and Stones of which the Altar was composed^b,
so

^a See Kings xviii. 17. &c.

^b The Hebrew Word *אֶרֶץ*, which our *English Version* has rendered *Dust*, signifies likewise *Earth*, and should have been translated so in this Place;

so that there was not the least Vestige of it left. Indeed, great Waters may be dried up, and the hardest Minerals be calcinated by natural or artificial Fires, *in Time, and with a great deal of Labour*; but this was effected *in an Instant*, or at least *in a very short Time*, else the Miracle would not have struck the People so much as it did: and if we consider what Time of the Day it was, and the Transactions which followed immediately, and required a pretty deal of Time, we shall be convinced that the Destruction of the Altar, &c. by Fire, must have been performed *in too short a Time* for any natural Causes, or any finite Agent to effect it. Supposing that Angels had got together a great Quantity of the most fiery or inflammable Matter diffused in the Air, set it on Fire, and made it fall down upon *Elijah's* Altar, and at his Desire (which is the utmost that can be supposed), this Fire would never have dried up the Water that was about it, in so short a Time,

Place; for how can Fire *consume Dust*? And what *Dust* could there be upon an Altar just erected, sufficient to occasion a particular Mention of it? Except by the *Dust* we should understand the very *Cinders* and *Asbes* of the Wood, &c. which were entirely dissolved and reduced to imperceptible Particles or *Atoms*; and then this would greatly heighten the Miracle, and make it appear still more above the Power of all natural Causes.

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(in a few Minutes we may imagine) much less have calcinated, vitrified, or totally dissolved the Earth and Stones; because we know by certain Experience, that even the strongest Lightnings or Thunders, which are composed of the very same Matter, are not capable of such an Effect, nor of any thing like it. And therefore it must have been produced, either by a new fiery Meteor, created upon this Occasion, or by adding a much greater Intenseness to the burning Quality of one already created, which is a kind of Creation; and in both Cases, the *Miracle* was visibly above the natural inherent Power of any inferior invisible Being. Upon this Account it is expressly called in the History before us, *the Fire of the Lord*, i. e. produced, caused, and sent down *immediately* by the Lord. And this appears very plain and unquestionable, since we find *Julian the Apostle* himself, acknowledging the Truth of it. *This*, says he, (*viz.* that Fire fell down from God upon the Sacrifices) *has happened but once under Moses, and another Time, long after, under Elijah the Tishbite* ^a.

I might add many more Instances to the same Purpose, but this would carry me too far.

^a See Grot. Comment. in 3 Reg. xviii. 38.

And by several express Passages.

far. I shall therefore only produce some few Passages, by which it will appear, that according to the Scripture-Notion of *Miracles*, God alone is the *original efficient Cause* of them. *Blessed be the Lord God*, says the *Psalmist*^b, *the God of Israel, who ONLY doeth wondrous Things*. And again, *‘The Lord ALONE doeth great Wonders*. Now that by these Wonders we are to understand *true Miracles*, and not merely surprizing, uncommon Events in the Administration of human Affairs, as some might imagine, plainly appears from the *Hebrew Word*^d, which not only imports so much, but moreover is the very same which is elsewhere evidently used to denote *Miracles*, as in the lxxviiith *Psalm*, wherein the

^b Psal. lxxii. 18. ^c *Ibid.* cxxxvi. 4.

^d מִלְאָה *Mirabilia*, à מִלֵּא *Mirificare*, *Mirabile esse; Esse supra Naturæ Cursum & Mentem hominum, & hoc est Mirum esse*. Vid. Pagn. *Dict. in Vocem*. The Hebrews have but three Words to express a *Miracle*, מִלָּא *Signum*, the most general, and the weakest of the three, being applicable to all manner of *Signs*, whether *natural* or *supernatural*; מִלָּא *Portentum*, which is stronger and less general, denoting only *Prodigies*, or uncommon extraordinary *Phænomena*, especially in Heaven; and מִלָּא, from whence מִלְאָה in the Passages before us, which is the strongest, most particular, and expressive of all, signifying constantly a true *Miracle*, *Mirum*, *Miraculum*, sic ea vocantur qua contra Naturæ cursum & ordinem.—Sola Dei sunt omnipotentia, i. e. according to PAGNINUS upon the Word, *such Things as are done against the Course and Order of Nature, by the Power of God alone*.

Prophet

Prophet reproaches the *Israelites* with having forgot the Works of God, *and his Wonders^a that he had shewed them*, both in *Egypt*, and in the *Wilderness*; of which he immediately after gives a long Enumeration. Thus again, in *Moses's* Canticle on the Passage of the *Red Sea*, it is said, *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the Gods? Who is like thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing WONDERS^b?* Plainly intimating, that as God is alone glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises; so none can do Wonders, or true Miracles, but He: And here the same Word, or a Word derived from the same Root^c, is used, as in the before-mentioned Places.

The learned Gentleman, whom I have so often animadverted upon, observes in Answer to the Argument drawn from thence, that “ these Passages have a particular Reference “ to the Gods of the Nations, who neither “ could, nor ever did do any wondrous “ Works; but do not exclude other Agents “ from doing them, who never were designed to be excluded by these Propositions.” Mention is made, it is true, in the last Pas-

• ונפלאותיו, & *Mirabilium ejus.*

^b *Exod. xv. 11.*

• עשה פלא, *faciens Mirabile, v. Mirabilia.*

sage of *false Gods*; but does it follow, that it respects them only? The second Part of it, that which is properly to the Purpose, is express'd in general Terms, and seems to me naturally to exclude all other Beings whatsoever, *Who is like thee, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing Wonders?* Besides, if *false Gods*, by which we are to understand not Wood and Stone, before which idolatrous Nations were wont to worship, but the Deities, or the invisible superior Agents, *Demons*, or *Genii*, represented by those Statues or Images (for certainly that was what they understood themselves); if, I say, such false Gods are here excluded from doing Wonders, so too of Course must all Angels, good or bad. But farther, because false Gods are mentioned in this last Passage, does it therefore follow, that they are also referr'd to in the two first, where there is not one Word said of them? neither do they by the whole Context seem to be at all in the Prophet's View. But the Gentleman seems to think that the Nature of the Thing itself requires that we should understand these Passages with that Limitation: *For, says he, it does not require an infinite Power to alter such Laws of God, as may make a true and real Miracle to us.* This,
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in my humble Opinion, is begging the Question; and he should, I think, have fully proved this Assertion, (which he has no where done, though indeed he has attempted it) before he had alledged it against such plain Passages of Scripture. I have shewn by a particular Examination of the greatest Part of the Miracles recorded in Holy Writ, that *it does require an infinite Power to alter such Laws of God, as may make a true and real Miracle to us*, according to the Scripture-Notion of it; and in Confirmation of this, I have now produced some Passages, the natural and obvious Meaning whereof clearly imports as much. The Gentleman says, they must not be so understood, because *other Beings, besides God, may work true Miracles*. But this is the Point to be proved, and I hope he would not have us believe it upon his bare Word. Surely, it is a strange Way of Reasoning, to go about to confute a proper and direct Argument, merely by asserting the contrary of that for which it is brought. But not to insist any longer upon it,

The Scripture every where represents *Miracles*, as a sufficient Evidence, and the proper Proof of a divine Mission. Our Saviour
constant-

constantly appeals to them, as being of themselves, and independently of all other Considerations, the best adapted to convince Men that he was truly sent from God. *I have*, says he, ^a *greater Witness than that of John, for the Works which the Father hath given me to finish; the same Works that I do, bear Witness of me that the Father hath sent me. If I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though you believe not me, i. e. though you be not convinced of the Divinity of my Doctrine, by the Consideration of its intrinsic Goodness, and superlative Excellence, believe the Works, THAT YE MAY KNOW AND BELIEVE that the Father is in me, and I in him.* The Jews had the same Notion of Miracles in general. *We know*, says Nicodemus, one of their Rulers, speaking to Jesus himself^b, *that thou art a Teacher come from God; FOR NO MAN CAN DO THESE MIRACLES, that thou doest, EXCEPT God be with him.* Likewise the Man born blind whom Christ had miraculously recovered, declares^c, *since the World began, was it not heard that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind.* IF THIS MAN WERE

^a John v. 36, x. 37, 38. See also *Ibid.* x. 24, 25. xi. 15. xiv. 11. xv. 24. ^b *Ibid.* iii. 2. ^c *Ibid.* ix. 32, 33.

NOT OF GOD, HE COULD DO NOTHING. And accordingly, we read that at the Sight of his Miracles, great Numbers daily believed on him: It was that which chiefly determined the People to embrace his Doctrine, and upon that very Account it was, that those Miracles were recorded. *Many other Signs,* says St. *John*^d, *truly did Jesus in the Presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book; but these are written THAT YE MIGHT BELIEVE that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, ye might have Life in his Name.* Ye Men of Israel, says St. *Peter* to the Jews, in his first publick Speech on the Day of Pentecost^e, *hear these Words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man APPROVED OF GOD, or rather, as the Greek Word imports, DEMONSTRATED to come*^{Αποδεικνύμενος}*from God among you, BY MIRACLES, AND*^{μύησις}*WONDERS, AND SIGNS (which Accumulation of Terms is here made use of to denote the Greatness and Unquestionableness of our Saviour's Miracles, according to the Stile of the Hebrews) WHICH GOD DID BY HIM, in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know.* Can any Words be plainer to shew, both that Miracles of themselves, and in their own

^d John xx. 30, 31.

^e Acts ii. 22.

Nature,

“ be what our Reason tells us is *right*,
“ and what may tend to our *Good*; or whe-
“ ther it be *immoral*, and tends to encou-
“ rage Idolatry, Superstition, Falshood, and
“ Vice in any Shape or Form, or any thing
“ contrary to the Attributes of God, or any
“ thing idle, useless, or absurd, or in any wise
“ prejudicial to me.” But to this I answer, if
I must in so particular a Manner examine a
Doctrine, before I can judge whether the
Miracle done in Confirmation of it proceeds
from a good or bad Agent, of what use can
Miracles be? Is the Doctrine true and good
in itself? I ought to submit to it, as soon as
I perceive it to be so; and then the Miracle
will signify just nothing, since no Miracle
can persuade me better than I should be,
when I had discovered its intrinsic Excel-
lence. Besides, by all the Observations which
I have hitherto made from Scripture, Mira-
cles ought to be considered, as *a short Way*
to convince Mankind of the divine Original
of a Revelation. But in this Case, they
would be so far from shortening the Inquiry,
that they would rather make it the longer,
and the more intricate; especially considering,
that though it be *very probable* that a good
Revelation proceeds from a good Being, yet
it does not *certainly* follow that it comes from

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God,

God, because it may *possibly* come from *some* other good invisible Agent. And here all the puzzling Difficulties started in Mr. Chubb's *Discourse*, relating to invisible superior Beings, which I shall examine by and by, naturally offer themselves. Of what use then can be an Argument which supposes so nice and so tedious an Inquiry, and is perplexed with so many Difficulties, especially to the Generality of Mankind, who want either Capacity or Leisure to enter into it?

It may perhaps be suggested, that "it is
 " certain from the Miracles done, that the
 " *Revelation* is not the Fiction or Fancy, or
 " Imagination, or Revery, or whatever it
 " may be called, of a mad or enthusiastick
 " Man, but what comes from above." Be it
 so! What shall I be the better for it, as long as
 I cannot be certain that these Miracles are the
 Work of God, in which Case I cannot, I
 ought not to embrace the Revelation as *di-*
vine. A good Angel being finite, is neither
infallible nor *impeccable*; without which there
 is no absolute Reliance upon his Wisdom and
 Goodness; he may lead me into Error, or
 impose upon me; and a *bad* Angel will cer-
 tainly do it if he can: And therefore nothing
 short of a divine *Original* ought to be the Ob-
 ject

ject of my *Faith*, let it appear ever so true, ever so good.

Moreover, a Revelation supported by Miracles may comprehend Things, the Truth or Falsehood of which my Reason is not able to make out, but entirely depends upon the Veracity and Authority of the Being who makes that Revelation, and works those Miracles. In this Case, what must I do? Why, it seems, and this is another Rule prescribed by some, "I ought to pay that Deference to the Revealer, as to admit what he says for a Truth, suppose that I cannot be hurt, and it may do me much good, if I receive it; even though I know no more of this invisible Agent, than that I have the Revelation from him.—There is no Possibility of knowing *à priori*, whether such a Mission be to deceive, or not; but a Man ought to obey, as being in the Hands of such superior Agent." But how can I know whether believing such Proposition or Propositions will not hurt me, and may do me much good; since *I am no competent Judge, by any natural Power I have, to discover whether they be true or false?* If they be false, my admitting them cannot, I am sure, do me any good, but may do me much hurt.

Besides, must I, when I have no other Motive of Credibility, believe a thing, only because it *may be* for my good? Or because *I am in the Hands of a superior Being*, who reveals it to me, and to whose Superiority in Rank, and in point of Judgment, I ought to pay that Deference? For my part, I always thought that nothing can be an Object of our Belief, but what either our Reason clearly sees to be agreeable to Truth, or is visibly founded on a Revelation, which we are sure comes from God; so that where the first ground of Assent is wanting, the second must be required, without which the Consideration of our *Good* is so far from being of any Weight to determine us, that it may lead us into Error, and thereby turn to our Disadvantage. As to the *Superiority* of the Revealer in Rank, Power, or Judgment, that can never be a sufficient Motive of Credibility, except we be certain that he is both *infallible* and *impeccable*, as has been already observed; much less when we do not know but it may as probably be an *evil*, as a *good* Being, in which Case we may be the Sport of his Cunning and Malice. More might be said upon this Subject, as well as concerning the other Rules laid down by the same Author,

thor, especially in Case of a Contest betwixt two Miracle-Workers; but I must hasten to a Conclusion of it; and this may suffice to shew how perplexed and unsatisfactory the Argument drawn from Miracles must be, and of what little Use it is to the generality of Mankind, if we allow that they may be performed by other invisible Agents, besides God.

I observe therefore, in the *last Place*, that if the contrary Opinion be not certainly true, God can never reveal himself effectually to Mankind, or give a general Revelation, which may be easily distinguished from those of other inferior invisible Beings. There are, according to Mr. Chubb himself^a, but two Ways of doing this, “ Either *first* by applying immediately to the Mind of every Individual of our Species, and thereby revealing to every Individual, the Truths intended to be made known; or else *Secondly*, by applying immediately to the Mind of some one or more of our Species, and revealing to him or them, the Truths intended to be made known, and then applying mediately by him or them to others, by requiring him or them to reveal, or publish those

If they are not a direct absolute Proof of a divine Mission, God can never reveal himself to Mankind.

^a P. 66, &c.

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

“ Truths to others, and them to others,
 “ and so on till that Revelation is communi-
 “ cated to all.” Both these Ways are liable
 to some Inconveniencies and Disadvantages,
 but the *latter* much more than the *former*;
 many Impositions and Frauds may be commit-
 ted under the Pretence of a Revelation made
 to one Man, or to a particular Set of Men,
 it is true; but then it is easy, or at least not
 very difficult, to discover them, and guard
 against them, because there is a standing Rule
 to go by, *viz. Reason* to judge of the *Truth* or
Non-Contradiction of the Doctrine revealed,
 and *Miracles* to prove the *divine Mission* of
 the Publisher of it. Whereas in the *latter*
 Case, the greatest Confusion and Disorder,
 will, as Men are made, naturally ensue,
 without any Way left to rectify it; at least,
 if we can judge of it by what has attended
 some Pretensions of this Kind. “ Thus (to
 make use of Mr. *Chubb's* own Observation)
 “ the *Enthusiasm* and *Madness*, if I may so
 “ call it, which took Place in the *last Age*,
 “ and which introduced great Disorder, was
 “ founded on a Persuasion, or at least a Pre-
 “ tence of an *immediate divine Application* to
 “ the Mind of each Individual. Every one
 “ *thought*, or *pretended*, that he was *imme-*
 “ *diately*

“*diately taught of God.*” And as in such a Case, neither the Decisions of Reason, nor Miracles can take Place, we may easily imagine what a deplorable State Mankind would soon be reduced to. It is not probable, therefore, that God should ever make use of this *last* Method; the *first*, though subject to some Inconveniencies, is the only one which we can reasonably suppose he would employ. But even this is not, cannot be in his Power, if *Miracles* are not of themselves, and independently of all other Considerations, a *full* and *proper* Evidence of a divine Mission; which they can never be, if other invisible Agents, besides God, either good or evil, can perform them. For in that Case, how is it possible to distinguish *divine* Revelations from Suggestions of *evil* Spirits, since they are both supported by the same kind of Proof? Nothing will do this effectually, but an Exertion of Power superior to that of all created Beings; Works, which we have all the Reason imaginable to think, are the immediate Productions of the Almighty.

We must, consequently, either suppose that God can never reveal himself to Mankind, or if we admit that he can, we must acknowledge that none but he can work true Miracles.

New Arguments from Scripture, shewing that Miracles are really such.

Miracles. And therefore they are expressly called in Scripture his *Seal*; *God the Father has sealed him (the Son of Man)* says our Saviour himself^a, or *has given him his Credentials*, by many great and unquestionable Wonders, as appears by the whole Context. But if they are his *Seal*, they must be peculiar to him, so as that no other Being can perform them; else they could not be his *Seal*, or it would be common betwixt him and other Beings, and therefore no *Seal*, since a *Seal* is designed to distinguish the Authority of the Person that uses it, from all other Authority. Moreover, if evil Spirits can work true Miracles, I do not see how the Crime of the *Pharisees* who ascribed our Saviour's Wonders to *Beelzebub*, could be called *sinning against, and blaspheming the Holy Ghost*, much less, declared to be *irremissible*. So great, so surprizing a Severity against this particular Sin, can never, I think, be accounted for, but by supposing that the Devil cannot perform those miraculous Works which *Christ* did: For admitting a bare Possibility of the contrary, it would have been some Extenuation of the Crime of the *Pharisees*; and where there is the least Excuse

^a John vi. 27.

left for the Sinner, there remains, according to all our Notions of God's Goodness and Mercy, some Hope of Forgiveness: Nothing can be *irremissible*, but what is *absolutely inexcusable*. But ascribing our Saviour's Miracles to *Beelzebub* was not *absolutely inexcusable*, unless it be evident that *Beelzebub* could not by his own natural inherent Power perform any such thing, and that God alone can work true Miracles.

The same may be said with respect to those Places wherein *Christ* himself declares, all those whom his repeated and amazing Wonders could not persuade to believe on him, *actually condemned*, and even liable to a greater Punishment at the last Day upon that very Account. *If I had not done among them*, says he^a, *the Works which none other Man did*, or true Miracles, (there is properly in the Greek, *the Works which no body else*, or no created Being, by his own natural Power, ever did^b,) *they had not had Sin*, or been guilty of Unbelief, or punishable for it; *but now they are guilty*, because *they have seen them*, and yet *have hated both me, and my Father*.—*Wo unto thee Chorazin, Wo unto thee Bethsaida; for if the mighty Works which were done in you,*

^a John xv. 24.

^b οὐδὲς ἄλλος.

had

A Treatise on MIRACLES.

*had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this Day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for thee^c. If invisible Spirits, either good or evil, can work true Miracles, as well as God; if Miracles do not of themselves, and independtly of all other Considerations, prove a divine Mission, and if they are only intended, as some would have it, to raise the Attention, and dispose the Minds of the Beholders to the receiving of the Doctrine which is at the same Time proposed; if all this be certain, how can such Denunciations against the unbelieving *Jews* be any ways reconciled with the Goodness and Justice of God? Must they then be treated at the last Day worse than the worst of Sinners, because they did not admit for *divine* Operations, Works which, after all, might have been effected*

^c Matt. xi. 21, &c.

by the *Devil* himself; or because they were not convinced by an Argument which was not of itself full and sufficient, nor even proper? *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* For my own Part, the more I think of it, the more I am persuaded that there is no other Way to clear this Difficulty, but by supposing quite the reverse, *namely*, that *Miracles* are the Works of God alone, and consequently of themselves a most unquestionable Proof of a divine Mission; for upon this Foot every Thing is plain: The *Jews* who rejected our Saviour's Miracles, and maliciously ascribed them to the Devil, were *entirely* inexcusable, as guilty of the *most heinous* Sin, and by their own Fault, in an irretrievable State of Damnation; and therefore *not to be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come*^a, but worthy to be *more severely* punished than the most profligate Sinners.

Against this *Hypothesis*, which, I hope, I have now shewn to be founded in the Nature of Things, and upon the general Opinion of Mankind, but especially upon the *Scripture-Notion* of *Miracles*, there is but one general Objection, taken from the many *Wonders* done, or supposed to be done, by *The Objection taken from the many Wonders supposed to have been done by wicked Men, or in behalf of false Religions.*

^a Matt. xii. 32.

Magicians,

gions, examined and answered.

Magicians, Enchanters, false Teachers, &c. or in behalf of *false Religions*; which therefore could not proceed from God, but must be the Work of evil Spirits. As this Objection has been already considered, and answered by other Authors, especially by Bishop Fleetwood, in his *Essay upon Miracles*, the Reverend Mr. Serces, in his French *Traité sur les Miracles*; and last of all, (and indeed the best of all,) by Dr. Sykes in his *Discourse concerning the Credibility of Miracles and Revelation*; I might be excused entering into it, and refer the Reader to those learned Authors. But because I cannot agree with them in every Thing they have said upon the Subject, and I have some new Observations to offer, I shall here lay down, in as few Words as I can, what seems to me to be most to the Purpose.

In the Instance of the Egyptian Magicians.

The *first* Instance we meet with in History, of Miracles supposed to be done by Men, who visibly were not commissioned by God, is that of the *Egyptian Magicians*, related in *Exod. vii. and viii.* They are there, as some People imagine, and Mr. Chubb has supposed, represented to have done the same Wonders as *Moses* did, turned their Rods into Serpents, Water into Blood, and brought

up

up Frogs upon the Land. But if we examine critically into it, we shall soon see that it was all TRICK, mere SLIGHT OF HAND, and nothing else. In order to prove it, I observe,

First, That the very Names given to these Men shew that they were *arrant Cheats* and *Juglers*, but had no Commerce with evil Spirits, as is supposed. The *first*, חכמים *Wisemen*, signifies in general, *Persons eminently distinguished in any Art or Science*, which in this Case must be determined by what follows. The *Septuagint* has rendered it by Κοφισαῖς, which generally has a bad Meaning, carrying with it an Idea of *Craft* or *Cunning*, and even of *Deceit*; and therefore is very applicable to *Juglers*, and such as used LEGERDEMAIN. The *Second* is מכשפים *Sorcerers*, as our Version has it; but it properly signifies *Men who by Slight of Hand can impose upon the Beholders, and make them believe, that they see what they do not see*^a. The *third* is חרטמים, which we translate

What these Magicians did was all Trick and mere Slight of Hand. The very Names given to them shew it.

^a מכשף, Secundum Rab. Abraham, est Præstigiator. Dicit enim quod est levis (agilis) manibus suis, qui tenet oculos, qui scit horas quando aliquid est faciendum, — qui circumstantibus ita oculorum aciem præstringit (id est valde stringit, aut claudit, obtenebrat) ut non advertant dolum, ut res aliter videre faciat quam sint. Unde Præstigium, Incantatio

late *Magicians*, and seems to be a general Word comprehending under it both *Wisemen* and *Sorcerers*, or *Juglers*; for *Moses* having said, that *Pharaoh* called the *Wisemen* and the *Sorcerers*, he adds, *Now the Magicians of Egypt, they also did in like manner with their Enchantments*^b. According to *R. Abraham*, and *Aben Ezra*, this Word denote People, who by casting the *Nativity* of a Man, can foretel his *Fortune* and *Success* in the *World*; FORTUNE-TELLERS; and in a larger Sense, those who understand *Nature*, the *Qualities*, and original *Causes* of *Things*, who can discover *secret hidden Things*, interpret *Dreams*, &c. *St. Jerom* has constantly rendered it *Diviners*, or *Enchanters*^c. And therefore if we judge by the natural Import of the *Hebrew* Names, it is plain that these *Wisemen*, *Sorcerers*, and *Magicians*, were a Set of People,

tatio, Delusio, falsa Ostentatio. Ut faciunt ii qui nostra Vernacula lingua dicuntur *Bagbatelarii*, et illorum delusio *Bagbatelle*. Vid. Pagnin. Diction. in Vocem. That is, according to the Rabbi Abraham; *Mecasseph* is one that uses *Slight of Hand*, that holds the *Eyes*, that knows the lucky *Hour*, or the best *Time*, when any *Thing* is to be done,—that can cast a *Mist*, or impose upon the *Eyes* of the *By-standers*, so that they shall not perceive the *Trick*, and makes them see *Things* otherwise than they are. Hence *Legerdmain*, *Jugling-Trick*, false *Shew*; just as those do whom we call *Juglers*, and *Shewers of Tricks*, and their *Deception*, *Slight of Hand*.

^b Exod. vii. 11.

^c Vid. Pagnin. in vocem:

who

who either had, or pretended to have, a vast Knowledge of Things, and under that Pretence, or by that Means, imposed on the Credulous, and the Ignorant; and by SLIGHT OF HAND, or particular Secrets in Chymistry, Mechanicks, or Experimental Philosophy, would seem to do strange, unaccountable, or prodigious Things. This will appear plainer still, if we consider the Manner in which they are said to have imitated Moses's first Miracles; *they did it with their Enchantments*, בְּלִהְטָם. Whether this Word be derived from לָאֵשׁ לְעֹשֶׂה, *operire, occultare, involvere*, or לָאֵשׁ לְעֹשֶׂה, *ardere, inflammare*, and the Substantive לָאֵשׁ *flamma, seu lamina polita & fulgens, Ferrum lanceæ aut gladii*; it is all one for my Purpose. The two first Roots will naturally lead us to understand by *Enchantments, Secret Arts, Legerdemain, &c.* But if we derive it from the last Root, as is most natural, then it will convey to us a more distinct Idea of those *Enchantments*, and shew that at the bottom they were but Slight of Hand, and *Deceptiones Visus*. For Rabbi David says in favour of this Derivation, that *this Sort of Incantation was performed by the Help of a Shining,*

ning, well polished Iron, or Blade of a Sword^d; that is, by dazling the Eyes of the Spectators with it, and casting as it were, a Mist over them, so that they could not see the true Object. Which is agreeable to the Practice of the Juglers of old, who used to play with a Sword so dexterously, as to seem to eat it, or run it into their Bodies, as appears by a Passage of *Apuleius*, quoted by Dr. Sykes, to whom I shall for Brevity's Sake, refer the Reader, not only for this, but for other Particulars, which very well deserve his Notice, and do either confirm, or illustrate this Explication. I observe therefore;

It does not appear from any Thing that Moses has said concerning them, that they had any Intercourse with evil Spirits.

Secondly, That it does not appear, either from the Names given to the *Magicians of Egypt*, or from any Thing that *Moses* has said in relation to them, that they had any familiar Intercourse with evil Spirits, or were assisted by them in what they did. Their Names, we have just now seen, import nothing like it, and the Arts and Sciences which they convey an Idea of, may be acquired in a natural Way, without the Assistance of superior invisible Beings. In the Book of *Daniel*, mention is made of such a Set of

^d *Vid. Pagn. in Vocem.*

People

People at the Court of the Kings of *Babylon*, which are described under the same *Hebrew Words*, and as using the very same *secret Arts*, and making the same *false Pretensions*, as *Astrologers*, *Diviners*, *Fortune-tellers*, and *Interpreters of Dreams*; but there is not one Word of their having any Commerce with evil Spirits. So far from it, that their ill Success, and their own Language plainly shew that they had none. They neither could tell *Nebuchadnezzar* his Dream, which he had forgot, nor even interpret another which he told them; *Tell thy Servants the Dream*, said they to him, *and we will shew the Interpretation of it* *. And when pressed to discover it by the greatest Promises and Threatnings, and by an Argument which shewed at the same Time, that the King saw full well their Knavery and Imposture, *Ye have prepared*, says he to them, *lying and corrupt Words, to speak before me till the Time be changed*, i. e. to amuse me till by some lucky Accident you may get off: *therefore tell me the Dream, and I shall know, that ye can shew me the Interpretation thereof*; for if they could not do the first, it was a plain Proof that they were but mere Pre-

* Dan. ii. 4, &c.

L

tenders,

tenders, and therefore could not do the last, it being as easy, if not easier, to give a right Interpretation of a Dream told, than to know what a Man has dreamed, though he does not know it himself: When pressed in this Manner, *I say*, they frankly acknowledged their Incapacity in these Words; *There is not a Man upon the Earth that can shew the King's Matter; therefore, there is no King, Lord, nor Ruler, that ever asked such a Thing at any Magician, or Astrologer, or Chaldean. And it is a rare Thing, that the King requireth, and there is none other that can shew it before the King, except the Gods, whose Dwelling is not with Flesh, i. e. who have no familiar Commerce with mortal Men*^b: Which is as plain a Declaration that they were not assisted by any invisible superior Being, as Words can make it. And indeed, it is very remarkable, that *Daniel* himself, and his three Companions, were reckoned among the *Magicians of Babylon*^c; and further it is expressly said, that *Nebuchadnezzar* had made him *Master of the Magicians, Astrologers, Chaldeans and Soothsayers*^d; which Place surely he would not have accepted of, had these People had any Intercourse with

^b *Ibid.* c. v. 10, 11.^c See *†* 13, 18.^d *†* 11.

evil Spirits. Can it be imagined, that those who refused the Allowance of Meat and Wine from the King's Table, for fear of violating their Law, and chose to be cast into the burning fiery Furnace, rather than worship the golden Image which *Nebuchadnezzar* had set up, would practise *DIABOLICAL Arts*, or have any Communication with those that did?

Moreover, in the History of the *Egyptian Magicians*, there is not the least Intimation of their having any Manner of Familiarity with evil Spirits, or being empowered by them to do what they did. *Moses* all along declares that his Miracles were the immediate Work of God; but when he comes to the *Magicians*, he never ascribes their Performances to any superior invisible Being: which is unaccountable, if they were really assisted by the Devil; for in that Case, he should have acquainted the By-standers with it, or at least his Readers when he wrote his History; that they might not confound *his* Miracles with *theirs*, and take him for a *Magician* too, or a Dealer in *black Arts*. You will say, *perhaps*, that for the same Reason he should have discovered the Cheat, if there were any, and said in plain Terms that

what these People did was either mere *Juggle*, or an Effect of their Skill in *Experimental Philosophy*, which he does not; and therefore his Silence must prove as strongly (if it prove any thing) against the last, as against the first *Hypothesis*. But this I deny; there was a very great Difference in the two Cases. In the *first*, it was impossible to distinguish by the Works themselves, betwixt the Productions of the Devil, and those of God, which yet it infinitely concerned both the *Egyptians* and the *Israelites* to do: In the *second*, it was very possible to make that Distinction, since what the *Magicians* did was not above the Power of Man to effect; and therefore *Moses's* Information of the Truth of the Matter was necessary in the *first* Case, but not so in the *second*. Besides, the Names he gives them, sufficiently shew what Sort of People they were, *arrant Cheats*, mere *Juglers*, skilled in the *Arcana*, or Mysteries of Nature. If I say, that a *Mountebank*, a *Shewer of Tricks*, a *Rope-dancer*, &c. has done so and so, upon such an Occasion, I need not tell *how* he has done it: The Thing speaks itself, and any body that understands *English* sees presently, without any further Explication, by what Means it was effected.

And

And consequently, as *Moses* is quite silent in the *first* Case, and as plain as need be in the *second*, it follows that the *second* is the true Fact. I add,

Thirdly, That not only *Moses*, but all other Authors who have ever mentioned this Transaction, either say not a Word of *the Devil's* being concerned in it, or clearly intimate that it was done by mere human Art. In the *seventeenth* Chapter of the Book of *Wisdom*, we find a Description of one of the Plagues with which the *Egyptians* were punished, namely *Darkness*, and on that Occasion these remarkable Words; *As for the Illusions* (or *Impostures*, for so the Greek Word *ἐμπαίγματα*, properly signifies) of *Art Magic*, they were put down, or overturned, confounded, and their vaunting in *Wisdom*, or their Ostentation of Learning and Knowledge, was re-
proved with *Disgrace*. For they that promised to drive away *Terrors* and *Troubles* from a sick Soul, were sick themselves of *Fear* worthy to be laughed at, § 7, 8. As this respects the *Magicians* being themselves afflicted with the Plagues of *Egypt*, which they were not able to remove, it is plain, that the Author gives it as his Opinion, and probably the received Opinion in his Time, that what they

All other Authors, who have taken Notice of this Transaction, intimate nothing like it, or rather suppose that it was all Artifice.

did was owing to Artifice, Fraud and Deceit. St. Paul speaks of the two Chiefs of *Pharaoh's* Magicians, by Name, *Jannes* and *Jambres*; but he is so far from supposing that they were assisted by evil Spirits, or performed true Miracles, that the Use he makes of their History seems plainly to indicate the contrary: For to them he compares those Hereticks, who under Pretence of a superior Knowledge in Religion, began to corrupt the *Christian* Faith, and led a very immoral, wicked Life; such false Teachers and Impostors, as the *Gnosticks*. *As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth; Men of corrupt Minds, reprobate concerning the Faith*^a. From whence it is plain he considers the Magicians of *Egypt*, as profligate Cheats and Deceivers only, and not as People that had any Dealings with evil Spirits. He adds, *But they shall proceed no further; for their Folly shall be manifest unto all Men, AS THEIRS ALSO WAS*. And how was those Magicians *Folly* made manifest, but by attempting to confront *Moses's* Miracles, and not succeeding in it, and so shewing themselves mere Pretenders and Impostors? For if they really turned

^a 2 Tim. iii. 8, 9.

their

their Rods into Serpents, &c. as well as *Moses*, no *Folly* could have appeared in their Case; they were so far upon a Level with him, and the Beholders must have made the same Judgment of both. If they had been assisted in it by the Devil, with whom they had a familiar Communication, *St. Paul* would not, I think, have used the Word *Ἀνομία*, *Amentia*, *Folly*, to express their Crime, but *Ἀσεβεία* *Impiety*, which is undoubtedly the proper Term for it. In the *Chaldee Paraphrases*, wherein *Jannes* and *Jambres* are named, and from which probably the Apostle borrowed those Names, there is not one Word of these Men having any Commerce with, or receiving any Assistance from evil Spirits. *Eusebius*, in his *Præp. Evang. Lib. ix. c. 8.* quotes a remarkable Passage from *Nu-
menius*, a *Pythagorean* Philosopher, “ *Jannes*
“ and *Jambres*, says he, were the *Scribes*
“ in religious Matters among the *Egyptians*;
“ they flourished in *Egypt* at the Time
“ when the *Jews* were driven from thence,
“ and they did not come behind any body
“ in the Science of *Magical Secrets*, (by
which he understands no more than the
Secrets of Nature, since he calls the Know-
ledge of them a *Science* or an *Art*, which

is attained by Study and Application, in a natural Way). “ They were chose unanimously by all *Egypt* to oppose *Museus*, (so he calls *Moses*), “ a Leader of the *Jews*, “ and whose Prayers were very prevalent “ with God.” Here is not a Syllable of the *Devil* assisting those *Magicians* in their *Opposition*, or pretended Miracles.

Josepbus himself, when he relates what they did, plainly seems to ascribe it to mere human Art and Juggle, though he elsewhere speaks much, and too credulously of evil Spirits, diabolical Magic, and Enchantments. For he says, “ that when *Moses* had done before “ *Pharaoh* those Miracles which he had “ wrought upon Mount *Sinai*, that Prince “ fell into a violent Outrage of Passion and “ ill Language, and said, you scandalous Runagate! *First*, you shewed *Egypt* “ a fair Pair of Heels to save yourself, and “ now you are come back again to juggle the “ People out of their Wits with your Exploits of *Slight of Hand* and Magic. You “ take upon you, as if you alone, forsooth, “ were skilled in this divine Mystery, and “ value your Reputation upon that idle *Pretence*, at such a Rate, as if the Multitude “ were to fall down and worship. But after

“ter all this *Vanity and Ostentation*, my
 “*Priests*, says he, I would have you to
 “know, can do all your Feats after you. So
 “the *Priests* were called, and bid to throw
 “down their *Rods*; which was done, and
 “they were immediately turned into Ser-
 “pents. This does not move me at all, says
 “*Moses*, for I am neither a Stranger to the
 “*Address* of the *Egyptians*, nor a Despiser
 “of them; but I may well affirm that the
 “Operations I perform are as much more
 “excellent than theirs, as the Power of God
 “is above that of their *Magic*, or Things
 “DIVINE more illustrious than HUMAN :
 “And I shall make it instantly appear, that
 “what I do, is not a fancy of *imposing Illusions*
 “upon a credulous Multitude, under the Re-
 “semblance of *Truth*, but the very Power of
 “an omnipotent God, &c.” This *Dia-*
logue, which is all of *Josephus's* own making,
 clearly shews, that he looked upon the Per-
 formances of the Magicians, as mere *Juggle*,
 and *Slight of Hand*, *Vanity and Ostentation*,
Address, human Operations, and *Illusions un-*
der the Resemblance of Truth (there is pro-
 perly in the Greek, a false deceitful Imitation

? Antiq. Jud. L. ii. C. xiii.

of a true Glory, or Power, *πλάνην τ' ἀληθῆς δόξης*); and therefore not true real Miracles.

The *Mahometans*, in the Account they give of them, represent them also as mere *Juggling-Tricks*. For they say ^b that “*Moses* having wrought some Miracles before the King of *Egypt*, and very much surprized him with them, the King was advised by his Council to amuse him with fair Hopes, till he had sent for some of the most expert Magicians from *Thebaide*. Accordingly *Sabour* and *Gadour* (i. e. I suppose, *Jannes* and *Jambres*) two Brothers, renowned for their *Magic Skill*, were sent for,—and appeared before *Pharaoh*, at the Head of his other Magicians, to the Number, as some make it, of 70,000. Besides these, there were two other excellent ones, with their Disciples; and lastly, the *Egyptian High-Priest* at the Head of all the Magicians of that Country. All these had prepared Rods and Cords filled with Quick-silver, which being heated by the Sun, imitated the Winding of a Serpent; but they were soon destroyed by

^b See *Herbel. Bibl. Ori.* p. 648, and *Calmet's Dict.* under the Word *Jannes*. *Universal History*, B. I. ch. 7. p. 497. that

that of *Moses*, to the great Surprise of all the Beholders, but especially of *Sabour* and *Gadour*, who thereupon renounced their Profession, and embraced the Religion of *Moses*, and were put to Death for it by Order of the *Egyptian* King, as holding secret Correspondence with *Moses*." Though this Account is full of fabulous Circumstances, which I have partly omitted, yet it shews that the *Mahometans* looked upon the Wonders wrought by the Magicians of *Egypt*, as *Hocus Pocus* Tricks, *Legerdemain*; for which they had some Ground, either from Tradition, or the Nature of the Thing itself.

Fourthly, If we consult History, we shall find that antient *Magic* is of a much older Date than any Account we have of Miracles performed by Men, whether real or pretended, and therefore could have nothing to do with working of Miracles; and that moreover it did not consist in any familiar Communication with evil Spirits, through whose Power they were performed. Those which *Moses* wrought before *Pharaoh* are the first that we find mentioned in any ancient Author, either *Sacred* or *Prophane*. " God, (as

Antient Magic is much anterior to any Account we have of Miracles performed by Men, and did not consist in any familiar Communication with evil Spirits.

(as Mr. *Shuckford* very well observes, though to another Purpose) “ had discovered his Will to Mankind by Revelation in all Ages. In the first and most early times, by Voices or Dreams: From *Abraham's* Time, the Lord appeared frequently to his Servants. But no such Wonders as were done in *Egypt*, in the Sight of *Pharaoh*, are recorded to have ever been performed in the World before.—God had not as yet enabled any Person to work Miracles, &c.” But before *Moses* publicly appeared, invested with this Power, it is plain there were *Magicians* in *Egypt*, and long before that Time, as is manifest from *Genes.* xli. where we find *Joseph* interpreting *Pharaoh's* Dream, which all the *Magicians* and all the *Wisemen* of *Egypt* could not do; nay, the *Chaldeans* who were older than the *Egyptians*, and indeed the first Nation in the World as to Antiquity^d, had also their *Magicians*, &c. Now if it be so, the Science or Profession of these People could not consist, at least in *Moses's* Time, in working, or pretending to work Miracles, of which there had been as yet no Instance or

^c Connection of the sacred and prophane History, B. ix. p. 417. ^d See Univers. Hist. B. ix. p. 930.

Sample, and probably for that very Reason, no Notion at all. Which will appear more evidently still, if we consider that in those early Times, *Magic* did not import a Confederacy or familiar Intercourse with invisible superior Beings, by whose Power Men were enabled to know, or to do wonderful Things: This is a Notion peculiar to the *Platonists* and *Pythagoreans*, and consequently of a much later Date^a. It is chiefly for want of attending to this that the *Magicians of Egypt* have

^a *Homer* and *Hesiod*, who lived above a thousand Years after *Moses*, are the first Authors we know of, that make mention of *Demons* and *Genii*; and from them *Plato*, and the *Platonicians*, have borrowed their Doctrine of Spirits, though it is even to be doubted, whether *Plato* himself really believed the Existence of *Demons*, since he reckons *Love* amongst them, and allegorizes much about it*. It is true, both he and *Pythagoras* are said to have travelled into *Egypt*, from whence they brought a great Stock of Learning. But the Query is, whether they had also from thence this particular Doctrine, or whether, supposing they had, it was the antient Doctrine of the *Egyptians*, or a much later Notion, which is more probable, since we find no mention made of it in early Times, and indeed so late as the *Babylonish* Captivity, after which these two Philosophers lived. They might have borrowed it from other Nations, as well as from the *Egyptians*, from the *Chaldeans* and *Persians*, whose current Opinion it was, when they visited them†. They may be, for ought we know, the Authors of it themselves; for what Knowledge they got in the East, they so made it their own, and mingled it with their particular Notions, that it is

* See Mr. *Fontenelle's* Hist. des Oracles, Ch. vi. † Vid. Mr. *Stanley's* Oriental Philosophy, and *Clerici* Ind. Philolog. in eundem.

have generally been thought to have acted under the Assistance of evil Spirits. But that I may not seem to advance this without Proof, I shall here beg Leave to transcribe a Passage from the learned Authors of the *Universal History*^b.

“ As to the first Foundation of this Science (*Magic*), we have already observed that the *Egyptians*——imagined, that the seven Planets governed the seven Days of the Week^c; and pretended that by the Observation of the Motion of the Celestial Bodies, through a long Series of Years, they had obtained the Art of foreseeing future Events^d. They also thought the In-

very difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish it in their own or their Disciple's Writings. And after all, there is so much Uncertainty in the History of those two Philosophers, especially of *Pythagoras*, that one can very little depend upon it; witness the Dispute that arose about it, the beginning of this Century, between Bishop *Lloyd*, Dr. *Bentley*, and Mr. *Dodwell*. *Pythagoras* was no better than an Impostor, and may have put upon the World in relation to his Journey over the East, as well as he did in relation to his having been in Hell all the Time that he kept shut up in a Cave. And what adds to the Suspicion is, that nothing was published of him for above a hundred Years after his Death, and then by People who do not seem to have had a very great regard to Truth, if we may judge of it by what they say of his pretended Miracles, &c. and some of whom lived even long since the Establishment of Christianity, and were its most inveterate Enemies, as *Porphyry*, *Jamblichus*, and *Hierocles*.

^b B. I. ch. iii. p. 220, 221. ^c Dion Cassius, L. 36. p. 37. ^d Cicero de Divin. L. i. Ch. i.

“ fluence

“fluence of those heavenly Bodies on the
“Elements, caused such Effluxes as might
“affect the Minds of those who were duly
“prepared to receive them, so as to enable
“them to deliver Oracles; and even that they
“might, by a proper Discipline, make them
“capable of working Wonders (i. e. *not true*
Miracles, for they could hardly have any Notion
of them, before any such had ever been wrought,
or before Moses’s Time, as I have just now
observed; but surprizing Things, &c.) and
“procuring Prodigies^a. For they believed
“the Sun, Moon, and Stars, were endued
“with Intelligence, and appointed by the
“supreme Deity to govern the World^b;
“and though they acknowledged that God
“might^c, upon extraordinary Occasions, work
“Miracles, reveal his Will by audible Voices,
“divine Appearances, Dreams, or Prophe-
“cies; yet they imagined also that, gene-
“rally speaking, Prodigies were caused, Ora-
“cles given, and Visions occasioned in a *na-*
tural Way, by the Observation or Influ-
“ence of the Courses of heavenly Bodies,
“and by the Operations of the Powers of

^a Plutarch de defect. Orac. ^b Cicero de Nat. Deor.
L. 2. c. 15, &c. ^c Acad. Quæst. L. 4. c. 34, 37.

“Nature;

“ Nature; and they conceived that their
 “ learned Professors could work Miracles (*as*
 “ *before*), obtain Oracles and Omens, and in-
 “ terpret Dreams by a deep Study of, and
 “ profound Enquiry into natural Know-
 “ ledge, and assisted by a proper Temper
 “ and Disposition of Mind, attainable by
 “ the Use of such Means, as they thought,
 “ had a natural Power to raise warm Con-
 “ ceptions, produce Enthusiastic Fury, and
 “ fetter their Reason, which they fancied,
 “ averted the divine Instinct, such as inebriat-
 “ ing Liquors, Music, and the like^a. And in
 “ all these Things they supposed the Deity
 “ not immediately concerned, but that they
 “ were the *natural Effects* of the Influence
 “ of the Planets and Elements, seeming
 “ strange and unaccountable to the Vulgar
 “ and Unlearned, but fully understood by
 “ Persons of Science and Philosophy^b.” It
 is plain, therefore, that the *Egyptians* in
Moses’s Time, and long after, had no Notion
 of evil Spirits, of *Demons and Genii*, and did
 not pretend to do Wonders by their Assist-
 ance, but only in a *natural Way, sine Deo*,
 without the Interposition of God, or of any

^a *Vid. Plutarch. ubi supra, p. 432.*
 Connection, &c. p. 391, &c.

^b *Vid. Shuckford’s*
 superior

dinary Assistance ; *then* to convince the People of his divine Mission ; and *lastly*, to persuade *Pharaoh* to let the *Israelites* go. But what could the *Israelites* and *Moses* himself say, when they saw the *Magicians* do the very same Miracles as he did ? Must not this have staggered him and made him despond, and at the same Time have dejected and dispirited the People ? And what Effect could *Moses's* Wonders have upon *Pharaoh* in such a Case ? How could they prevail upon him to let the People go against his own most visible Interest, as long as his *Wisemen* and *Enchanters* were able to perform the same ? Was he not so far perfectly excusable ? And how could he be said to have *hardened his Heart*, and have been justly punished for it ? Must not he *naturally*, and indeed *necessarily* have concluded from such a Contrast, that neither the Wonders of *Moses*, nor those of the *Magicians* were true divine Operations, and that consequently he was still at Liberty to follow his own Inclination and Interest, as to letting the *Israelites* go ?

If it be suggested that God suffered the *Magicians* to work true Miracles by the Assistance of evil Spirits, in order to try *Pharaoh*, to have an Opportunity of multiplying his

his Plagues upon him, and to convince him the better by the Superiority of his Miracles, that *Moses* did not perform them by any *Magic-Art*, but by his own Power and Commission, &c. I answer, that all this is taken for granted, only to support a groundless *Hypothesis*, since there is not the least Intimation of it in Scripture. Besides, was it a fair and equitable *Trial*, to put *Pharaoh* into Circumstances, in which he could not help opposing God's Designs? Can we imagine that for the Sake of multiplying his Wonders in *Egypt*, or indeed upon any Consideration whatsoever, God would induce the Beholders of them to mistake them *unavoidably* for *Diabolical* Operations? For if the *Magicians* performed the very same Things, as *Moses* did in his three first Miracles, how was it possible to distinguish them from their Enchantments? And then, what Necessity is there to suppose such a round about Way, when the same End might have been served by a much shorter and more efficacious Method? God knew that *Pharaoh* would not let the People go, till after many repeated Plagues inflicted upon him; he therefore only needed to leave him to himself, and he was sure that he would give him Opportunity enough to

multiply his Wonders, without permitting, or empowering the *Devil* to work Miracles in opposition to his own. The best Way to convince him that he had sent *Moses*, as well as to clear *Moses* from all Suspicion of *Magic*, was no doubt to enable him to work Miracles, which all the *Magicians* in the World could not perform, and to restrain the Devil from exerting his Power in their Behalf, rather than to suffer him to imitate his divine Operations. And would not their *Confession* have been full as good, and as satisfactory to *Pharaoh*, if they had been stopped from the Beginning, and, finding themselves unable to perform the very first Miracle, been forced to acknowledge that it *was the Finger of God*? In short, if we believe God to be infinitely wise, good, and just, we can never attribute to him such a preposterous Conduct as this. And if our Saviour's Argument to the *Pharisees*, who accused him of having cast out Devils by the Power of *Beelzebub* their Prince, be in itself conclusive, viz. *If Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself, how shall then his Kingdom stand?*^a it must be much more so with respect to God. If God permitted the *Magi-*

^a Matt. xii. 26.

cians of Egypt to work true Miracles, (which is the same Thing in this Case, as if he had worked them himself,) it is plain *he is divided against himself, and how can his Kingdom stand?* This must appear plainer still in the *Hypothesis* of those who suppose that God himself empowered those *Magicians* to do what they did, to confront and oppose *Moses's* Miracles; and in this I perfectly agree with Dr. Sykes, that to conceive that God "should enable Men to work against his own Designs by an express particular Delegation of extraordinary Power, is something very harsh, and too extravagant to be admitted without sufficient Proof:" Only I think these last Words should have been omitted, for no *sufficient Proof* can ever be alledged in Favour of a Supposition which is *too extravagant to be admitted*: And indeed this here appears to me so *extravagant*, that I wonder how it could ever come into any Man's Head.

But it will be objected, that *Moses* all along speaks of what the *Magicians* did, in the same Manner as he speaks of his own Miracles, and supposes that they performed the very same Things that he did. For it is said, that after he had cast down his Rod

before Pharaoh, and before his Servants, and it became a Serpent; *the Magicians of Egypt also did in like Manner with their Enchantments, They cast down every Man his Rod, and they became Serpents*^a. Likewise in the Miracle of turning the Waters into Blood, it is remarked, that *the Magicians of Egypt did so with their Enchantments*^b. And in that of the Frogs, they are said to have done so *with their Enchantments, and brought up Frogs upon the Land of Egypt*^c. And therefore they must have worked true Miracles, and have been assisted in it, either by the Devil, or by God himself. How specious soever this Objection may seem, it is easy to answer it by observing,

Moses's
Expres-
sions, in re-
lating this
Fact, do not
import,
that the
Magicians
did exact-
ly the same
things, as
he himself
did.

Sixtly, That the Hebrew Particle ׀, which we translate *so*, or *in the same Manner*, does not necessarily imply a perfect Resemblance or Imitation; but in general all Sort of Similitude, whether near or distant. *The Magicians of Egypt did so*, i. e. they did something like it, or, what they did appeared to have some Resemblance of what Moses performed. That we must take it in this loose Sense, is plain from *Exod. viii. 18.* wherein it is said, that the *Magicians did so*

^a Exod. vii. 11, 12.

^b 22.

^c *Ibid.* viii. 7.

with

with their Enchantments, to bring forth Lice, but they could not. For it is evident, they did not do what *Moses* did, since *they could not bring forth Lice*; and therefore this only means, that they attempted it, and did what was previous to it, as *Moses* had done, namely, *to stretch out their Rods, and smite the Dust of the Earth*: So that no Stress can be laid upon this Expression, nor any Argument drawn from it, for the Reality and Truth of the Wonders performed by the *Magicians*. It is true, that in the Relation of the foregoing Miracles, *Moses* declares moreover expressly, that *they turned their Rods into Serpents, Waters into Blood, and brought Frogs upon the Land*; but then he tells us in what Manner they performed this, *They did so WITH THEIR ENCHANTMENTS, i. e.* as I have shewn before, by their *covered secret Arts, by Slight of Hand, and particular Artifices*. And indeed, if we attend to the History, or consider the Nature, and all the Circumstances of their Transactions, we shall soon be satisfied that what they did was done that Way, and that they proceeded in opposing *Moses*, as far as their *Legerdemain* Tricks, or particular Secrets would help them to mimick his Miracles, but when this

failed them, they were forced, in order to save their own Credit, to acknowledge that it *was the Finger of God*, or a manifest Exertion of his infinite Power, which they could not pretend to imitate or controul.

The Magicians had Time to prepare themselves for their seeming Wonders, which increases the Probability of their having done them by mere Sights of Hand.

Seventhly, then, It is remarkable that *Pharaoh* did not call together the *Magicians of Egypt*, till *Moses* had already turned his Rod into a Serpent, so that they knew before-hand what they were to do, and had Time to prepare themselves for it. Besides, they had very likely heard of his working the same Miracle some Time before, in the Sight of the Children of *Israel*. Accordingly, they all came with Rods, or Wands in their Hands, and probably Serpents alive in their Sleeves, which they dextrously threw down instead of their Rods, so that they seemed to *become*, or to be transformed into *Serpents*; for *Moses* speaks according to the outward Appearance, and not according to the Reality of Things, as he himself, and all other inspired Writers are used to do, when they make mention of *natural Effects*. And how the Magicians did this, we may easily conceive, when we consider that Serpents may be tamed, or rendered inoffensive, by breaking those two Teeth through which they inject their Poison;

son; that some of them are perfectly harmless, as our common Snakes; and that it has been in all Ages the Practice of Juglers and Mountebanks to play Tricks with them, and handle them as boldly as we do any other Animal. Dr. Sykes has quoted Instances of it from Sir *Paul Ricault*, the *Digests*, and Mr. *Greaves*, to which I shall refer the Reader. But there is a Passage in the *Psalms*, which shews that this is a very antient Practice, and that those who exercised it were reputed *Magicians*, and thought to tame, by their Enchantments, these venomous Creatures. *Their Poison* (i. e. of the Wicked and the Liar) *is like the Poison of a Serpent; they are like the deaf Adder that stoppeth her Ear; which will not hearken to the Voice of Charmers, charming never so wisely*^a. This Allusion is founded on the vulgar Opinion of the Adders hearing but with one Ear, which they stop either with the End of their Tail, or by laying it close to the Ground, whenever they find themselves in Danger of being enchanted. Which Opinion owes its Rise to the Imposture of Juglers, who first discovered the Way to play all Manner of Tricks with Serpents, without being Hurt by

^a Psal. lviii. 4, 5.

them;

them; and in order to gain greater Credit and Admiration among the People, and to prevent their prying too narrowly into their Secrets, pretended to *charm* these venomous Creatures by a supernatural Skill which they had got. But as they found their Art ineffectual upon that Sort, which is, or seems to be deaf, and whose Bite is reckoned absolutely incurable, they had no other Way to save themselves, than by affirming, that their *Charms* consisted in the Sound of certain Words, which could not have any Effect against this particular Sort, because they had the Skill of turning a deaf Ear to them^a.

Thus with respect to the *second* Miracle of *Moses*, the turning of the Waters of *Egypt* into Blood; all that the *Magicians* did, and indeed could do, was easy to be done in a *natural Way*. For it is said, that *all the Waters that were in the River*, and even in particular *Streams, in Ponds and Pools, in Vessels of Wood, and in Vessels of Stone, were turned into Blood*; so that *there was Blood throughout all the Land of Egypt*^b. Now it appears by what follows, that the *Magicians* tried to imitate *Moses*, whilst this Plague still

^a See Universal Hist. B. I. C. 7. p. 854, 855.

^b Exod.

vii. 19, 20.

continued;

continued; *And the Magicians of Egypt, says he, ^a did so with their Enchantments: — And Pharaoh turned and went into his House, or returned to his House from the River; which shews that it was done upon the Spot, while the King was still on the Banks of the Nile, and consequently before the Waters were restored to their natural State; for had not this been effected immediately, Moses's Miracles would not have been so sensible, nor made so proper an Impression upon Pharaoh, and all the Egyptians. But what is added puts it out of all Question; And all the Egyptians digged round about the River for Water to drink, for they could not drink of the Water of the River^b; which clearly imports, that the Plague lasted some considerable Time, probably the seven Days which are mentioned after. And therefore the Magicians could have but a small Quantity of Water (likely some of that which was digged about the River) to work upon, into which it was easy to convey secretly some chymical Preparation, to make it resemble Blood. This was so much the more feasible, as they knew before-hand what Miracle Moses intended to perform; for he had*

^a *Ibid.* § 22, 23.

^b § 24.

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publicly forewarned *Pharaoh* of it. Let me add, that there was a very material Circumstance in which they could not imitate him, namely, that *the Fish that was in the River died, and the River stunk*^a; for they could not by their Performance kill the Fish which was actually dead; and yet this (Killing the Fish) was the true Sign, and an unquestionable one of the Reality of *Moses's* Transmutation of the Waters into Blood. They therefore *did not do so*, neither as to the Extensiveness, nor as to the immediate necessary Effect of it; and the little they did, may easily be accounted for by Artifice and Slight of Hand.

The same Observations will hold true with respect to the *third* Miracle, that of the *Frogs*. It is plain by *Moses's* Narration, that the *Magicians* tried to imitate it before the Plague was removed, and that therefore they did not, they could not, *in the same Manner* as *Moses* did, *bring up Frogs upon the Land of Egypt*, which was actually filled with them. All that they could possibly do, was to *bring up* some few in the Place, or Room where *Pharaoh* stood with his Attendants, after it had been cleared of those that

^a *Ibid.* § 21.

were

were already in it. This they might easily have compassed by mere *Legerdemain*, having had Time enough to provide themselves secretly with Frogs, and there being then so many at Hand. Moreover, what shews that both this and the preceding Performance of the *Magicians*, must have been done during the Continuance of the Plagues inflicted by *Moses*, is, that it is utterly improbable that *Pharaoh* would have suffered them to bring the same Calamities upon *Egypt* over again. What a sad Punishment must the turning of all the Waters into Blood, have been upon the King and all his Subjects, who by this Means had no Water to drink, and no Fish to eat, which yet was their constant Diet; and were forced to dig for new Springs, to allay their Thirst? How irksome and grievous must those Swarms of Frogs which filled their Houses, and crept into their Chambers, their Beds, and the very Places and Utensils where they dressed their Victuals, have been to them? Who can imagine that *Pharaoh* had so little Regard for his own Ease and Safety, and for the Welfare of his People, as to be willing to see such Plagues as these renewed upon *Egypt*, through his *Magicians* Performances, who acted not only

ly by his Permission, but by his exprefs Orders? Especially considering that he did not know whether they could equally remove them at Pleasure, and Experience shewed him that they could not: For it is exprefly faid that he was forced to apply to *Moses* for it, which he certainly would never have done, if they had been able to relieve him. And this leads me to the

If they wrought true Miracles, it is surprizing that they could neither remove the Plagues, nor produce Lice.

Eighth Consideration, *namely*, If these Men truly and really turned all the Waters into Blood, and brought Frogs upon all the Land, by the Assistance of Evil Spirits, how comes it that they could not remove those Plagues? Was it more difficult to restore Water to its former natural State, than to alter it, or transform it? to drive away or kill Frogs, than to bring them up? Surely the same Power that enabled the Magicians to do the *last*, could and would have enabled them to do the *first*. But the Truth is, they never performed the *one*, nor could do the *other*; or if by secret Arts and Slight of Hand, they seemed to turn *some* Water into Blood, and to bring up *some* Frogs, the same Artifices could be of no Use to them for the Removal of the true miraculous Plagues. Moreover, it is natural to ask, why they could not produce

duce *Lice*, as well as *Serpents* or *Frogs*. Is the Creation of one kind of Animals more easy in itself, than that of another? Or does it require more Power to form a small organiz'd Body, than a large one? Did not Creation suppose an *infinite Power*, as was before observed, which cannot admit of *more* or *less*, one should rather be inclined to think the contrary. Whence then is it that the Magicians were not able to perform this *fourth* Miracle? For they attempted it, but in vain, and were soon forced to acknowledge that it was *the Finger of God*. You'll say perhaps, God, who for good Reasons had permitted them to proceed so far, would not let them go any farther, and set Bounds to the Power of the Devil by which they acted. But this has no Manner of Foundation in Scripture; and the Thing itself may easily be accounted for in a natural Way, without recurring to an extraordinary divine Interposal. I observe therefore,

Ninthly, and *Lastly*, That in the Case of the Production of the *Lice*, the *Magicians* had no Time to prepare themselves for it, as in the former Miracles. *Moses* did not forewarn *Pharaoh* of what he intended to do, nor give him any Time to consider of it, as he

Their failing in this last Wonder was owing to the Want of Time to prepare themselves for it, and

to the natural Difficulty, if not Impossibility of the Thing itself.

he had done before. But all of a sudden, without any previous Notice, he ordered Aaron to stretch out his Hand with his Rod, and smite the Dust of the Land, which immediately became Lice in Man and in Beast, throughout all the Land of Egypt^a: So that the Magicians were surprized, and could not play their Tricks. Besides, the very Dust of the Land being then actually turned into Lice, which were upon every body, and upon themselves too, they could not pretend, without Folly, to do any thing like it, except they had produced a new Kind of Lice, which might easily be distinguished from those already brought forth by Moses. But as they were unable to do this, they had no other Way to save their Credit, but to own that what Moses had done in this respect, was an immediate Production of God himself, and therefore no Wonder if they could not imitate it. Which Confession they would equally have made in the three preceeding Miracles, had they not found Means to impose upon the By-standers, by doing something that seemed to be like them. As they had never performed themselves, nor ever seen before any true Miracles, it is more than probable

^a Exod. viii. 16, 17.

that they, as well as *Pharaoh*, at first took *Moses* to be like one of them, skilled in Juggling Tricks, secret Arts, and the Knowledge of the Powers of Nature ; especially considering, that, as *St. Stephen* tells us ^a, he *was learned in all the Wisdom, or all the Sciences, of the Egyptians*, having been brought up at Court, where he staid till he was forty Years old, which these People must have known. The *Talmud* says, that when he began to work his Miracles, they despised him, and told him in a bantering Way, *Thou bringest Straw to Affra*, a Place in *Egypt*, where Straw abounded ; meaning that he had chosen the wrong Place to play his Tricks, in a Country that was so well stocked with Jugglers and Conjurers of all Sorts ^b. And *Philo* introduces them speaking to *Pharaoh* and his Court after this Manner, *Why are you frightened? We are not ignorant of such Things, seeing we profess the same ourselves* ^c. And therefore they attempted without any Hesitation to oppose *Moses*, as thinking themselves full as skilful as he was in those secret Arts and Sciences. And when they were once en-

^a Acts vii. 22.
cap. ix.

^b Talmud Babylon. Tit. Menachot.
^c Phil. in Vit. Mos. Vid. Warren cont. Burnet,
p. 40. Univ. Hist. p. 494, 495. E.

gaged in the Contest, they found themselves obliged, for their own Reputation, to stand it out, as long as they possibly could, with any Appearance of Success, impose upon the Beholders, though they soon saw that what *Moses* did was much above all their Skill and Ability: Which Conduct will appear the less surprizing, if we consider that they were perfectly acquainted with the Disposition of *Pharaoh* and all his Court, and knew very well that *they* would be satisfied with the least Resemblance of it, nay even help them out, and determine the Dispute in their Favour. Had they been assisted by evil Spirits, they would not have desisted so easily, but would have attributed their Miscarriage in the Miracle of the Lice, to some Want of proper Enchantments, or Application on their Part, and so proceeded in confronting *Moses*, till a second, or third Miscarriage had fully convinced them of the Weakness and Incapacity of the Power by which they acted. *Pharaoh* himself, who had a particular Interest in the Case, would have made the same Judgment, and obliged his *Magicians* to go on in opposing *Moses*, in hopes of better Success^d. But instead of that, we find

^d See *Shuckford's Connect.* Vol. II. p. 405, &c.

he made no further Use of them, nor did they attempt any thing further. No sooner was their Imposture exposed to the Public, but they were confounded, and forced in their own Defence to acknowledge the Power of God in *Moses's* Miracles. They remained at Court quiet Spectators of his following Wonders, and shared equally with the *Egyptians* in all the Plagues inflicted upon them. For it is expressly remarked, that *the Magicians could not stand before Moses, because of the Boil* (which was the sixth Plague); *for the Boil was upon the Magicians, and upon all the Egyptians*^a.

And now I must desire the Reader to take Notice, that though I have endeavoured to explain how the Magicians of *Egypt* could perform what they did, by mere Juggle and Artifice, and how they miscarried in the Production of Lice; I do not pretend to have represented exactly every Circumstance of the Case. Perhaps they made Use of some other Means, besides those I have mentioned; perhaps their Disappointment was owing to some other particular Cause. Various are the Ways of imposing upon credulous and superstitious People, especially when they are willing to

^a Exod. ix. 11.

be deceived, as *Pharaoh* was in this Case; and no less various are the Means and Occasions of discovering, and confounding Imposture. *Moses's* Narration is very short and concise; he has visibly omitted many particular Circumstances, which were not necessary to his main Design, but which would, at this Distance of Time, give us a better Insight into this whole Transaction, and sufficiently account for every Passage of it. And therefore it is not to be expected that we should be able fully to satisfy ourselves about it; it is enough if it does but appear, that what the Magicians did in Opposition to *Moses*, might easily have been done in a natural Way, and was very probably done by Slight of Hand, or some particular Artifices and Secrets. And this, I think, I have clearly made out by what I have said upon this Piece of History; so that no Objection can be drawn from it against my general Assertion, THAT GOD ALONE CAN WORK TRUE MIRACLES.

But as some other Passages of Scripture are alledged in Favour of the contrary, I shall briefly examine them.

The first is that in *Deuteronomy* xiii. 1, &c. *If there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer*

Dreamer of Dreams, and giveth thee a Sign or a Wonder, and the Sign or the Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other Gods, which thou hast not known, and serve them: Thou shalt not hearken to the Words of that Prophet, or that Dreamer of Dreams; for the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord your God with all your Heart, and with all your Soul. A false Prophet seems here supposed to be able to work Signs and Wonders, which cannot be the Productions of God, and therefore must be performed by evil Spirits. To this I answer,

First, That the *Hebrew* Words, which our *English* Version renders *Sign* and *Wonder*, do not always imply a *true Miracle*, but also denote a *Prediction*, or *surprizing Event*, or *Phænomenon*, as well as a *Miracle*. The first *אֵימָה*, is a general Term, importing all Manner of *Signs*, even those in which there is nothing wonderful, and is used *Isai.* xli. 23. to express *Things to come*, being then derived from *אָתָה*, *venit*, (See *Pagn. Dict. in Vocem.*) Likewise the other Word *מוֹפֵת*, does properly signify an *ominous Phænomenon*, or *Prodigy*; *Portentum*, a *Portendendo*, i. e. *Præostendendo*, quod portendat aliquid futurum,

The Passage in Deut. xiii. 1, &c. does not import, that false Prophets may, by the Help of evil Spirits, work true Miracles.

says *Pagninus*. Thus we find it used, (*Joel* iii. 3. in the *Hebrew*, or ii. 30. in the *English*;) *And I will shew Wonders*, מופתים, in the *Heavens and in the Earth*; where it is plain that *Wonders* signify no more than *Prodigies*, strange surprizing *Appearances* explained by the Words immediately following, *Blood and Fire, and Pillars of Smoke*.

Secondly, I think it is evident, that these two Words are here used to denote the *Prediction* of some future Event, *If there arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and giveth thee* (not *maketh before thee*, as it should be, if *Miracles* were meant in this Place,) *a Sign or a Wonder*; and the *Sign or the Wonder* COME TO PASS: Which clearly shews, that it must be understood of a *Thing foretold*, and not of a *Miracle*. And therefore the Passage may be paraphrased thus, “ If a Man who pretends to a prophetic Spirit, or to divine by Dreams, should come and tell you, in order to seduce you into Idolatry, that such and such a strange *Sign* or *Appearance*, (as a *Comet*, an *Eclipse*, a *North Light*, &c.) will come to pass; or, if actually come, that it portends such and such a *Thing*, and he will give it to you as a certain *Sign*, that such and such a *Thing* will happen

“ pen; and that Thing which he has
 “ thus foretold, should in Effect come to
 “ pass, *whereof he spake unto you, saying, Let*
 “ *us go after other Gods, which thou hast not*
 “ *known, and let us serve them; thou shalt*
 “ *not hearken unto the Words of that Prophet,*
 “ *or that Dreamer of Dreams.*” In this
 View this Passage has nothing to do with
Miracles. It is true that a Prediction when
 founded upon a certain infallible Foreknow-
 ledge, is in itself a Miracle: But a Man may
 by mere Chance or Conjecture, hit the
 Truth, and so *divine* aright, of which we
 have many remarkable Instances in Heathen
 Oracles: And therefore he is not to be be-
 lieved, merely because he has luckily foretold
 some particular Event which is come to pass.

Thirdly, What confirms this Explication
 is, that the Person here called a *Prophet*, is
 likewise called no less than twice, a *Dream-*
er of Dreams, so as to shew, that in this
 Place they are *synonymous Terms*. *If there*
arise among you a Prophet, or a Dreamer of
Dreams, &c.—Thou shalt not hearken unto
the Word of that Prophet, or that Dreamer of
Dreams, &c. Now a *Dreamer of Dreams*
 is one who has or pretends to have divine
 Dreams, by which he foretels future Things;

or who interprets the Dreams of other People. Thus *Joseph* was both a *Dreamer*, and an *Interpreter of Dreams*. He told his Brethren two Dreams he himself had dream'd, which signified his future Grandeur, Elevation, and Dominion over them. For this they hated him, calling him a *Dreamer*, or, as it more properly imports, a *Master of Dreams* (See *Genes.* xxxvii.). He interpreted the Dreams of two Officers of *Pharaoh*, under his Care in the Prison, and those of *Pharaoh* himself, which were all verified by the Event, (*Genes.* xl, xli.). Thus likewise *Daniel* not only interpreted the Dreams of *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretelling his own Fate, and the Fate of his Kingdom, but moreover discovered one of them to him, which he had entirely forgot: And for this he was raised to the Office of *Chief of the Governors over all the Wisemen of Babylon*, (*Dan.* ii. 48. and iv.). From whence it plainly appears, that this particular Art or Gift, whether true or counterfeit, consisted in foretelling Futurities, and that therefore the *Sign* here spoken of, must be the *Prediction* of some future Event. Bishop *Patrick* in his *Comment* upon the Place, has much the same Interpretation; For he says that these Words, *Giveth thee a Sign*

Sign or a Wonder, are to be understood thus, *If he foretel some wonderful Thing which should shortly come to pass.* And what puts the whole out of all doubt, is the following Passage, (*Jerem. xxx. 8, 9.*) *For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, Let not your Prophets and your Diviners that be in the midst of you, deceive you; neither hearken to your Dreams, which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my Name; I have not sent them, saith the Lord.*

Fourthly, and lastly, What *Moses* adds, for the Lord your God proveth you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your Heart, and with all your Soul, plainly shews, that he does not, cannot speak here of true Miracles, wrought by the Hands of false Prophets. For is it in the least probable, that God, purely to try his People's Adherence to him, would put such a Temptation as this in their Way? A Temptation which was in itself *invincible*, since Miracles are the true and proper *Seals* to a divine Mission. Is it not entirely repugnant to his Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice, to let the Worship of Idols be confirmed by the same Proofs, that he himself made Use of to establish his own, even without opposing immediately

mediately, and upon the Spot, superior Miracles to outweigh the Impression of the first, as it is commonly supposed was done in the Contest between *Moses*, and the Magicians of *Egypt*? And indeed, as Bishop *Fleetwood* very rightly observes, “ They who
 “ think that God would ever so tempt his
 “ People, will be at a Loss to find how it
 “ is possible for him, ever to undeceive
 “ them : A Miracle cannot do it, for it was
 “ a Miracle led them into Error, and un-
 “ hinged them from the true Belief of
 “ one God. I will be bold to say, that this
 “ is a Temptation from which there is no
 “ Way to escape.” For if it be suggested, as it is by those who are in a different Way of thinking, that the Nature of the Doctrine, which in this Place is to persuade Men to Idolatry, would shew, that the Miracles worked in favour of it were not to be credited ; I answer, that in this Case, Miracles could no more confirm the Unity and true Worship of God, than establish *Polytheism* ; and it was as easy to judge of the Truth of the former, as of the Falsity of the latter, by enquiring into the Nature of it. And therefore they who imagine, that *Moses* speaks in this Place
 of

of true Miracles performed by false Prophets, render all those that were done by God himself, to engage his People to a steadfast Adherence to his Service, useless, and indeed must necessarily give up all Miracles in general, as absolutely insignificant. From whence it follows, that the Caution given in this Passage does not relate to *Miracles* that might be performed by the Assistance of evil Spirits, and against which there was no Possibility to provide; but to *Predictions* of pretended *Prophets* and *Diviners*, which, though they should come to pass, were by no means true Signs of a divine Inspiration, because to an attentive Inquirer it was easy to see that they were but *Chance* or *Guess-work*, or at best founded on a *particular Knowledge of natural Causes and Effects*; which would be sufficient to guard him against all possible Seduction by them.

The next Passage, which seems to suppose, that other Beings besides God, can by their own inherent Power work true Miracles, is that *Matt. xxiv. 24. There shall arise false Christs and false Prophets, and shall shew great Signs and Wonders, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very Elect.* But it must be observed,

First,

The Objec-
tion taken
from Mat.
xxiv. 24.
answered.

First, That the *Greek Words* σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα, *Signs and Wonders*, exactly answer to the *Hebrew* ones in the before mentioned Passages *Deut. xiii. 1.* being the very same which the *Septuagint* has made Use of in that Place; and, for the same Reasons, do not necessarily imply *true and undoubted Miracles*, but only *strange surprizing Effects and Appearances*. That these Words ought to be taken in the latter Sense, will soon appear, if we consider,

Secondly, That our Saviour speaks in this Place of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Forerunners of it, and that therefore his Meaning must be gathered from the History of those Times. Now we read in the *Acts of the Apostles* (viii. 9, &c.) of one *Simon*, who soon after our Saviour's Death, is said to have bewitched the *People of Samaria* by his *Sorceries*, or magical Arts, μαγείαις; in-
somuch that they looked upon him as the *great Power of God*, or as being invested therewith; but it does not appear from these Expressions, that he did true real Miracles. There is a *natural* and *artificial*, as well as a *diabolical Magic*; and though we should admit that *Simon's* was of this last Kind, it would not follow, that it enabled him to perform Works

truly miraculous, except it had been previously proved, that the Devil can of himself do such Works, and communicate the Power of doing them to other Beings; which I utterly deny, and is the very Point in Dispute. The *Samaritans* calling him *the great Power of God*, is no Argument that he acted by that, or any other supernatural Power; it only shews, that they thought so, and that he had so far imposed upon them, as to make them believe it. And indeed all the Circumstances of this Story plainly prove that he had no such Power, but was a mere Juggler and Impostor. The Text says, *He gave out, that he was some great Person; so Mountebanks* usually represent themselves; but it does not say that he wrought Miracles. So far from it, *he wondered, beholding the Miracles and Signs which were done by the Apostles*, inasmuch that he outwardly embraced their Doctrine, and was baptized. And *when he saw that through the laying on of their Hands, the Holy Ghost, or the Power of Miracles, was given, he offered them Money*, to have the same Power. All which he would never have done, had he really worked true Miracles before. For in that Case, he would have thought himself

self as great as the Apostles ; would not have expressed any Surprize at the Sight of their Wonders ; would not have followed them as a Disciple, much less would he have desired to purchase a Power which he actually enjoyed ; but he would have opposed them with all his Might, and prevented the Conversion of the *Samaritans*, who could have had no Reason from their Miracles to go after them, if *he* performed Miracles, as well as *they*. It is plain therefore from *St. Luke's* Account of this Man, that he never wrought any true Miracle : For as to the Story some have told of his pretended Wonders at *Rome*, his Contest with *St. Peter*, his surprizing Flight, &c. it is of so little Authority, and favours so much of the *Popish Legends*, that I think it needless to take any further Notice of it.

Mention is made also in *Acts* xiii. 6, &c. of one *Barjesus* a Jew, who is represented as a *Sorcerer*, or *Magician*, and a *false Prophet* : But no Miracle is attributed to him, nor any Thing like it. It is said indeed, that *he withstood Paul and Barnabas* in their Endeavours to bring the Governor of *Cyprus*, *Sergius Paulus*, to the Faith of the Gospel ; but

but it is not said, that he did it by opposing his Miracles to theirs, but only that *he sought*, or endeavoured, *to turn away the Deputy from the Faith*, or to prevent his Conversion. And in the severe Reproof which St. Paul gave him upon it, there is not the least Intimation of any Miracle done, or even pretended to be done by him. The same may be said of those *false Prophets*, and *false Teachers*, which soon crept in among the *Christians*, and are often mentioned in the Writings of the Apostles. We find them there described under the worst Colours, as wicked *Impostors* and *Seducers*, but never as *Miracle-Workers* ^a.

And if from those Writings (I mean only the *Epistles*) which were all published before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, we pass on to the History of *Josephus*, who has left a par-

^a See Gal. i. 6, &c. ii. 4. iii. 1, &c. iv. 17, 18. v. 9, &c. Philip. iii. 2, 18, 19. Colos. ii. 8, 16, &c. 2 Thes. ii. 1, &c. 1 Tim. iv. 6. 2 Tim. iii. Tit. i. 10, &c. Heb. xiii. 9. 2 Pet. ii. 1. John ii. 18, 19, iv. 1. &c. 2 John viii. Jude 4, &c. Revel. ii. These false Prophets and Teachers were Simon Magus, and his Master Dositheus, a Samaritan, who pretended to be the *Messias*; Menander, Carpocrates, the *Nicolaitans*, and the *Gnosticks*. And it is further observable, that though the *Fathers* have left us a particular Account of their several Heresies, yet they do not say a Word of any true Miracle done by them.

particular Account of what happened before that memorable Event, we shall be convinced that the false Prophets who arose in that Period of Time, were but mere Pretenders and Cheats. Thus we read in his *Antiq.* B. xx. Chap. 2. that “ while *Fadus* was in
 “ his Government of *Judaea* (under the
 “ Reign of *Claudius*) there was a kind of a
 “ Quack-Magician, whose Name was *Theu-*
 “ *das*; a Fellow that set up for a Prophet,
 “ and drew a huge Train of Rabble after
 “ him, upon a Pretence that if they would
 “ follow him to the River *Jordan*, and take
 “ their Goods along with them, he would
 “ but give the Word, and the Waters should
 “ divide, and leave them a Passage to go
 “ over dry Foot. This *Impostor* had a World
 “ of Followers, but their Folly and Madness
 “ cost them dear ^a, &c.”

^a This *Theudas* must not be confounded, as some have done, with that other *Theudas* mentioned *Acts*, v. 36. For *Gamaliel* speaks there of one of that Name who lived some considerable Time before, and according to *Origen*, *Cont. Cels.* L. i. p. 44. even before the Birth of *Christ*: But this here lived under the Government of *C. Fadus*, i. e. near 50 Years after; which Observation is confirmed by what *Gamaliel* adds, that after him (the *Theudas* he mentions) rose up *Judas of Galilee*, in the Days of the Taxing; now it appears by *Josephus*, that this Taxing, which gave Rise to the Rebellion stirred up by *Judas*, was made by *Cyrenius* Governor of *Syria*, about the tenth Year of *Christ*. (See *Antiq.* B. xviii. C. 7.)

Like-

Likewise in the vith Chap. of the same Book, he tells us, that “ while the *Thieves* “ and *Murderers* were at Work in one Place, “ there were *Magicians* and *Impostors* as busy “ in another, the Multitude following them “ in Drove into Solitudes and Desarts, to see “ the *Signs* and *Miracles* they promised “ them ; but they paid dear for their Curiosity, for they were presently taken up “ by the Order of *Felix* (who governed “ *Judæa* sometime after *Fadus*) and divers “ of them put to Death. There came at “ the same Time a certain Person out of “ *Egypt* to *Jerusalem* ^b, setting up for a Prophet, and inviting the common People to “ follow him up to the Top of Mount *Olivet*, some five Furlongs from the City ; “ for when he came thither he would but “ speak the Word, he said, and they should “ see the Walls of *Jerusalem* fall flat to the “ Ground, and make Way for them to enter “ the City through the Ruins. When *Felix* “ came to hear of this Adventure, he “ made his Soldiers stand to their Arms, and “ breaking in upon them with Horse and “ Foot, routed the Rabble, killed four hundred upon the Spot, and took two hundred

^b Mention is made of him *Acts* xx1. 38.

“ alive ; but the *Egyptian* that led them was
 “ not to be found.” In his *Wars*, (B. ii.
 Chap. 12.) he calls him a *Pretender*, that
passed for a Prophet ; and he speaks of a *Sort*
of Miscreants, Impostors, and Seducers, “ who,
 “ under the Colour of Religion, set Men a-
 “ madding after strange Opinions and Inno-
 “ vations. They withdrew the People into
 “ Woods and Solitudes, upon Pretence that
 “ God had a Work in Hand, to set them at
 “ perfect Liberty ; and that he would reveal
 “ himself farther to them by Tokens from
 “ Heaven, that would give them an infalli-
 “ ble Assurance of it. *Felix* saw mani-
 “ festly what they were a-doing, and found
 “ it necessary to nip the Design of a Re-
 “ bellion in the Budd ; so that he sent out a
 “ Body of Horse and Foot after these *En-*
 “ *thusiasts*, and destroyed a great Number of
 “ their Disciples.” In another Place (*Wars*;
 B. vii. Chap. 11. *sub finem*, & 12. *ab initio*.)
 he tells us “ that it was a common Practice
 “ of the Faction in *Jerusalem* to pretend
 “ Revelations, to keep the credulous Multi-
 “ tude firm against all Dangers, and secure
 “ them from deserting ; and that these super-
 “ stitious Wretches were easily seduced into
 “ a Belief

“ a Belief of false Oracles, Counterfeits, and
“ Impostors.”

Again, he makes mention (*Ib.* Chap. 31.) of one *Jonathan* a Weaver, a kind of an *Enthusiast*, and a wicked Man, that drew a World of simple People after him into Woods and Desarts, under a Pretext of shewing them Prodigies and Visions ; and the *Imposture*, says he, *passed for current among the common Sort.*

Thus we see, that *Josephus* all along looks upon those false Prophets and Seducers, which appeared in *Judaea*, from the Death of *Christ* to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, as mere *Impostors*, or *Enthusiasts*, who pretended to work Miracles, but wrought none : And this is so much the more remarkable, as he speaks much elsewhere of *Magic* and *Prodigies*, and seems to be over-credulous in this Respect, or at least over hasty in relating strange wonderful Things, which would suit better the History of *Livy*, or *Tacitus*. Besides, it is utterly improbable that if real Miracles had been wrought by Impostors during that Period, he would have omitted them ; since nothing could better excuse the Guilt and Folly of his Countrymen in taking up Arms against the *Romans*, than to say,

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that

that those who seduced them to it had done many Wonders truly supernatural, which persuaded them that they were, as they pretended to be, commissioned from God ; and nothing could more effectually lessen the Credit of the Miracles of *Christ* and his Apostles, than to oppose to them unquestionable ones performed by People who did not believe them, and even by Impostors ; which certainly he would not (being so averse as he was to Christianity) have neglected to do, had there been any such Thing. And therefore we may be sure, that the *Signs* and *Wonders*, which our Saviour says these People would *shew*, were nothing but mere *Delusions* and *Cheats*.

Thirdly, If they had been true undoubted Miracles, such as those of *Christ* himself, to what Purpose was it to forewarn the Christians of them, and bid them to beware of the false Christs and false Prophets that should work them ? How could they possibly know by their Works, (for I have already proved that it is the Nature of the Works, not the Nature of the Doctrine, that must determine in this Case) whether they were really false Christs and false Prophets, or not, since these Works were exactly the same as those which

our

our Saviour had done to prove that he was sent from God? Like Miracles must either produce an equal Belief, or equally suspend it in both Cases, It is usual for Heads of Sects, and those that will set up a new Doctrine, to bid their Followers beware of any one that should pretend to oppose them, even under the most specious Colours; and our Saviour's mere forewarning his Disciples of *false Christs and false Prophets, who should shew great Signs and Wonders*, could never be a sufficient Reason to guard against them and reject them, unless there was an essential manifest Difference between their Miracles and his own, *namely*, that, while his were real undoubted Miracles, theirs would be but counterfeit ones, Juggles, and Impostures.

Fourthly, This is confirmed by our Saviour's adding, *insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very Elect*. By the *Elect* we must understand the true Christians, whether *Jews*, or *Gentiles*, inhabiting *Judæa*, as in Ver. 22. The Expression, *if it were possible*, does not import an absolute Impossibility, but only a very great Improbability; for so it is used *Acts* xx. 16. *Rom.* xii. 18. And why was it very improbable that Christians should be *deceived* by the *Signs and Wonders*

Wonders of false Christs, and false Prophets, but because they would be upon their Guard (especially after this Caution) and by diligently enquiring into these *Signs and Wonders*, would soon see that they were but Cheats and Delusions, and not in the least to be compared to the mighty Works which our Saviour did in his Life-time? Had they been true real Miracles, the best *Christians*, with all their Care and Attention, could no more help being *deceived* by them, than the most unbelieving profligate *Jews*. They must have took them for what they were, and of Course ascribed them to a divine Power. And therefore their being here supposed able to withstand the Seduction, is a clear Proof that these *Signs and Wonders* had nothing truly miraculous in them.

What St. Paul says of Antichrist, 2 Thess. ii. 9. is no Proof that the Devil can work true Miracles. The last Passage usually alledged in this Case, is that of St. Paul, *2 Thessal. ii. 9.* where, speaking of *Antichrist*, he says, that *his coming is after the working of Satan, with all Power, and Signs, and lying Wonders.* But this is so far from proving that the Devil can of himself work, or empower Men to work true Miracles, that it rather proves the contrary, since his Operations are expressly called *lying Wonders*; that is, not (as some would have it

it, without any manner of Reason, or Authority) *true Wonders in Support of a Lye*, or of a false Doctrine, but *false, counterfeit Wonders*, i. e. *Impostures*; for this is the natural Import of the original Words, *τέρατα ψεύδους*, *Miracula Mendacii*, i. e. *Mendacia*, according to an *Hebraism* frequently to be met with in Scripture, and of which we have repeated Instances in this very Chapter; where *Antichrist* is called *the Man of Sin*, or the superlatively great Sinner; *the Son of Perdition*, or he that is worthy of, and condemned to an utter Destruction: So again, it is spoken of *the Mystery of Iniquity*, or of an iniquitous Mystery; and (which comes nearer still to the Phrase before us) of all *Deceivableness of Unrighteousness*, *ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ τῆς ἀδικίας*, *in omni deceptione vel fallacia Injustitiæ*, i. e. with all unjust wicked Imposition and Delusion; which last Words, as they have an immediate Connexion with that Phrase, plainly shew that it ought to be taken in the beforementioned Sense, and in no other. I shall only observe farther, that this is a very obscure Passage, which has hitherto puzzled all the Commentators, so that no great Stress can be laid upon it. And indeed, whether we understand by the *Wicked*

foretold in it, *Simon Magus*, *Caligula*, the *false Prophets* which arose in *Judæa* before the taking of *Jerusalem*, the *Zealotes* shut up in the Temple, and horribly prophaning it by their Villanies, or the *Pope of Rome*, (which in my humble Opinion is the most probable) it is plain from History, that he never performed any true Miracle; and consequently, that the *Signs and Wonders* attributed to him, must be false and counterfeit ones, or mere Impostures,

But to draw to a Conclusion of this Subject; I will allow that the Devil can by his own inherent Power do strange surprising Things, cause new *Phænomena* or Appearances, which to the Generality of Mankind may seem unaccountable, and play wonderful Tricks. His superior Knowledge of the secret Powers of Nature, his long Experience, Agility, and invisible Way of acting may enable him to proceed so far; though we must not imagine, that even in this he may do what he pleases, considering that by his Fall, and the coming of *Christ*, he has lost great Part of his original Power, or is greatly restrained in the Exercise of it. But I utterly deny that he can work true real Miracles, for the Reasons before al-
ledged;

ledged; and that any Instance of a true Miracle done in Support of a false Pretence to a divine Mission, (for this is the Point in Debate) can ever be produced. *Moses, Jesus Christ, and Mahomet*, are the only Persons we read of in History that pretended to be sent from God for the Establishment of a new Religion. The two first wrought true Miracles, as has been shewn, and their Religion was therefore divine; but the last never wrought any, and even expressly declared that he had no such Power, as may be seen in the *Koran*, being conscious both of his Imposture and of the Difficulty of counterfeiting true Miracles, and imposing upon the Generality of Mankind that Way. This was, however, a fine Opportunity for the Devil to exert himself, and it is a wonder he did not, if he had any Miracle-working Power of his own; except it be thought that he was angry with *Mahomet* for pulling down Idolatry, and setting up the Doctrine of the Unity of God, as the *Basis* of his new Religion; but what he lost in that Respect, was abundantly made up to him in the gross Sensuality allowed, and in the many superstitious Ceremonies prescribed by it. Strange! that he should so far overlook, or so

so little understand his own Interest, not only upon this, but upon all such like Occasions. For all other Founders of Religions, or of particular Ways of Worship, among the Heathens, never laid any Claim to Miracles. Some of them indeed, as *Zoroastres*, *Minos*, *Lycurgus*, *Numa*, &c. pretended to have received them from the Gods, but they did not so much as attempt to perform Wonders in Confirmation of it. And for this Reason, I think I may be excused taking any Notice of those many Miracles reported to be done by some famous Persons, either while living or after their Death, as *Vespasian*, *Apollonius Tyaneus*, and, since the great Corruption of Christianity, *Saints* of all Orders, Conditions, and Sexes, some of which even never existed but in the Imagination of *Legendaries*; for these pretended Miracles do not appear to have been performed in Proof of any new Doctrine, or Religion; and besides, the egregious Falsity, Absurdity, and Fabulousness of them have been often, and sufficiently evinced, by very considerable Writers ^a.

Let

^a See Bishop Fleetwood's *Essay on Miracles*; Dr. Geddes's *Tracts*; Dr. Middleton's *Letter from Rome*; the Rev. Mr. Serce's *Traité Sur les Miracles*, wherein he has defended the same Hypothesis concerning the immediate efficient Cause of Miracles, which I here maintain, &c.

Let me observe, *Lastly*, that the Opinion of the Devil's Power of working Miracles, is entirely owing to the Heathen Fables; to the *Platonic* Philosophy, of which most of the primitive Fathers were so great Admirers and Followers; to their particular Way of Disputing with the Heathens, and their ascribing to the Devil all the Oracles of their false Gods; to the *Manicheism*, which revived the *Persian's* antient Doctrine of two Principles, Co-eternal and Co-equal, the one being the first Cause of all Good, and the other of all Evil; and lastly, to *Papery*, which appointed, *first*, peculiar Officers, called *Exorcists*, to cast out Devils, not so much for the spiritual Good of the possessed, as for their own temporal Advantage; and then *Inquisitors of heretical Pravity*, as they are stiled, who not finding Work enough in discovering and punishing Heretics, filled the World with strange Notions, and Stories of *familiar Spirits*, *Commerce with the Devil*, *Magic* and *Witchcraft*; and put to Death an incredible Number of pretended *Witches*, and *Inchanters*, under Colour of Religion, but really to serve their own wicked Views, and secure the usurped Dominion of the *Pope*. And therefore to entertain

tain such an extravagant Opinion of the Devil's Power, is to fall again into those superstitious Errors and abominable Practices from which the Gospel, and our happy Reformation, have, or ought to have fully delivered us.

But I must not forget to remark at the same Time, that though this strange Opinion has so long prevailed in the World, yet it has been constantly exploded by the wisest Men, both among the *Heathens* and the *Christians*. The Poets themselves, who by their Fictions contributed not a little to the spreading of it, often deride it when they speak their own Minds, free from vulgar Prejudice. So *Horace* (*Epist. ii. ad Jul. Flor.*)

*Somnia, terrores magicos, miracula, sagas,
Nocturnos lemures portentaque Thessala rides?*

Likewise *Ovid*, (*de Art. Am. Lib. ii.*)

*Fallitur Oemonias si quis decurrat ad artes,
Datque quod a teneri fronte revellit equi,
Non faciet quod vivat amor Medeides herbae,
Mixtaque cum magicis mersa venena sonis.*

And *Metamorph. Lib. iii.* he speaks of *Magicæ fraudes*, Tricks, and Impostures of Magic.

Magic. 2. *Curtius*, (*Lib. vii. c. 4.*) speaking of one *Cobares*, a Magician, *Homo Magicæ Artis*, adds immediately to explain his own Opinion, (*Si modo Ars est, non vanissimi cujusque Ludibrium*) *If it be really an Art, and not the Sport, or the Juggling Trick of any great Cheat.* *Cicero* in his Books *De Divinat.* wherein he explains the Origin and Nature of *Magic*, treats it with the greatest Contempt. *Pliny* (*Hist. Nat. L. xxx.*) discovers no better Opinion of it, calling it, *Artium fraudulentissimam*, the most deceiving or tricking of all Arts; *Magicas Vanitates*, i. e. *Magic Frauds and Impostures.* *Eusebius* in his *Præpar. Evang. Lib. iv.* has preserved some Fragments of the Work of one *Oenomaus*, a Greek Philosopher, against all Heathen Oracles, in which he laughs, not only those Oracles, but likewise all Divination and Magic to scorn, *as being mere De-lusion and Cheat.* And though *Eusebius* himself, in his Disputes with the Heathens, ascribes them to the Devil, yet he cannot help acknowledging in this Place, that they were *nothing but Impostures.* For he tells us that the Priests appointed over them having been lately examined in a Judicial Way about it, had confessed that it was all Artifice and
Fraud,

Fraud; and even given in Writing, and shewn the Manner in which they used to do it^a.

There is also a remarkable Passage of *Clemens Alexandrinus*, to this Purpose, " You
" may, if you please, says he^b, cry up these
" silly nonsensical Oracles, those of *Claros*,
" of *Apollo*, of *Didymus*, *Amphiaraus*, *Am-*
" *philochus*. You may add to them also the
" Auguries, and the Interpreters of Dreams
" and Prodigies. Bring also before the
" *Pythian Apollo*, those who used to divine
" by Meal or Barley, and those who were
" so much esteemed for speaking out of
" the Belly. Let the Secrets of the *Egypt-*

^a Ἐν δέ τι προαίτις τοῖς εἰρημύοις, μέγιστον ἂν
εἴη καθεωρεσθὲς κεφάλαιον, ὡς ἦδη καὶ τὸ ἄγαν θεοφό-
ρων, αὐτῶν δὲ τὸ μάλιστα ἱεροφαντῶν, θεολόγων τε
αὐτοῖς καὶ προφητῶν πλείους ἢ μόνον πάλαι ἀλλὰ καὶ
ἐναγχῶς καθ' ἡμᾶς αὐτὲς, ἐπὶ τῇ θεοσοφίᾳ ταύτῃ
βοηθόντες, ἀλλὰ βασάνων αἰκίας ὑπὲρ τῶν Ρωμαϊκῶν
δικαστηρίων, τὴν πᾶσαν ἐξεφώνησαν πλάνην ἀνδρῶν
ἀπάταις γίνεσθαι, καὶ γοητεῖαν τελεχνασμένην, τὸ πᾶν
εἶναι ὁμολογήσαντες. Οἷγε καὶ τὸ πάντα τρόπον τὴν κα-
τασκευῆς, καὶ τὰς μεθόδους τὴν κακοτεχνίας, ταῖς
πρὸς αὐτῶν ἐν ὑπομνήμασιν ἀφεθείσαις φωναῖς ἐν-
γράψαντο. Διὸ δὴ καὶ τὴν ἀξίαν τῆς ὀλεθρῆς πλάνης
διπλῶς ἐκτίσαντες, πάντα λόγον ἀνεκάλυψαν, αὐτοῖς
ἔργοις τὴν τὴν δηλημένων δοτιδεῖξιν πεισασάμενοι.

^b Strom. Lib. iii.

“ *tian* Temples, and the *Necromancy* of the
“ *Etrurians* remain in Darkneſs, ALL THOSE
“ THINGS ARE CERTAINLY BUT EX-
“ TRAVAGANT IMPOSTURES, AND
“ MERE TRICKS, LIKE THOSE AT DICE.
“ The Goats that have been bred up to Di-
“ vination, and the Crows which have been
“ taught to deliver Oracles, are, in a Man-
“ ner, but Confederates with theſe *Moun-*
“ *tebank Impoſtors*, who delude all the
“ World.” But we have moreover the De-
cree of a very antient Council, the firſt of
Ancyra (the Metropolis of *Galatia*,) held
ſome Years before the *Nicene*, i. e. in 315,
wherein the common Opinion of Witch-
craft, and the Devil’s Miracle-working Pow-
er is condemned as *Antichriſtian*. “ For,
“ ſay they, an incredible Multitude of Peo-
“ ple, being prepoſſeſſed with that falſe Opi-
“ nion, believe that theſe Things (*the idle*
“ *Stories about Witches, &c.*) are true, and
“ by believing them, they deviate from the
“ true Faith, and fall again into *Heathen-*
“ *iſm*, aſcribing a divine Power to ſome o-
“ ther Beings beſides God. And therefore
“ the Priests ought in their reſpective
“ Churches, earneſtly to preach againſt
“ it, and let the People know that theſe
“ Things

“ Things are entirely false.—Whosoever
 “ therefore believes that any Creature can
 “ be changed for the better, or for the worse,
 “ or be transformed into another Shape,
 “ or Resemblance, except by the Creator
 “ himself, who has made all Things, and
 “ by whom all Things were made, is with-
 “ out Doubt an Infidel, and worse than a
 “ Heathen.” And among the Decrees of
 the Council of *Bracara* or *Bragues*, held in
 the Year 563, against the *Priscilianists*, who
 followed in great Measure the Doctrine of
Manes concerning the two Principles, there
 is one which anathematizes all those who
 believe *that the Devil can make any Creature,*
and cause Thunders, and Lightnings, and
Tempests, &c. by his own Power. And if
 he cannot so much as raise Storms, surely he
 cannot work true real Miracles.

*The great
 Contempt
 of Mira-
 cles among
 the Hea-
 thens, is no
 Argument
 that they
 did not ge-
 nerally look
 upon true
 Miracles
 as the*

To what I have before alledged concern-
 ing the general Opinion of Mankind, that
*Miracles are the Works of God alone, and there-
 fore proper Arguments of a divine Mission,* it
 may be objected, That the Contempt of Mi-
 racles among the Heathens, which a late in-
 genious Author ^a has endeavoured to make
 out, rather proves the contrary; for if they

^a *An Enquiry into the Rejection of the Christian Miracles by
 the Heathens, &c. by the Reverend Mr. Weston.*

had generally looked upon Miracles, as a direct and sufficient Attestation from Heaven, they would never have despised them after the manner they did. But if we examine the Instances brought by that learned Gentleman in support of it, we shall only find that all Kinds of *Magic, Divination, Auguries*, and the like, and all *romantick Prodigies*, or *fabulous Miracles*, were in great Disrepute among the wisest and soberest of them, as I myself have just now observed. But this does not prove that the Heathens in general had *no Notion*, or at least *a very low Opinion*, of true and real Miracles, as the Author would have it. All that it proves is, that the *Wonders* done, or supposed to be done among them, were found to be but *Frauds and Impostures*. Had there been any true ones ever wrought, and properly attested, they would naturally have distinguished between *true* and *false* Miracles, and not have condemned them all in a Lump, as mere Fables or Cheats. And therefore their general and constant Disregard of them is to me a very strong Presumption, that no real Miracle was ever performed in the Heathen World. Under any other Light whatsoever their Behaviour is unaccountable: For to

*Works of
God
ALONE,
and a pro-
per Atte-
station of
a divine
Mission.*

say, as the before mentioned Author supposes, that they acted in this by Principle, or that they had in general, *antecedently* to, and *abstractedly* from any particular Account of Miracles, no Opinion at all of such Operations, and looked upon them as absurd and impossible, is to advance a very groundless *Hypothesis*, which, with all his Labour and Industry, he has not been able to support.

And indeed, the many *pretended* Miracles reported in the *Pagan* World, plainly suppose that the Generality of the People had a *Notion* of *true real* ones, and thought them *possible*: For if they had not, it would have been very ridiculous and insignificant for Statesmen and Priests, to make use of forged or counterfeit Miracles, in order to serve their political Views and Purposes. But admitting that a *few* Philosophers, and those too among the *Sceptics*, did in fact reject all Miracles, as being naturally impossible (which is what this Author has laboured to make out) does it follow that all the rest of the Heathens rejected them likewise? Or what Weight can the Opinion of *these Philosophers* have, against the general Sense of the *Pagans*? It is true their *Lawgivers* did not
 1 pretend

pretend to Miracles, i. e. themselves to perform true real Miracles ; but does it prove that they had no Notion of any such thing, or acted upon the Supposition, that the People believed nothing of it? Not in the least. Their Reason for declining all Pretensions of this kind, was, that they knew full well it was not in their Power to work true Miracles, and it would have been Madness to attempt it, and of a very dangerous Consequence if they were found out in counterfeiting them. But, however, they laid Claim, as has been already observed, to such *extraordinary* Things, as plainly supposed the *Possibility* of Miracles, and in which the Imposture could not so easily be discovered. Thus *Numa* pretended to a familiar Intercourse with the Goddess *Egria* : And *Mabomet*, though he openly disclaimed all Power of working Miracles, yet affirmed that he had received his *Koran* from God, by the Ministry of the Angel *Gabriel*, who constantly inspired and assisted him ; that he had been in Heaven, where he had the most glorious Visions ; that Armies of Angels attended on his Battles, and fought for him, &c. ^a All this he

^a See Mr. *Salé's* Translation of the *Koran*, p. 110, 176, 227, 236, &c.

knew he might *safely* impose upon the People, there being no one to give him the Lie. And no sooner was he dead, but his most intimate Disciples, in order the better to persuade the World of his divine Mission, ascribed many Miracles to him, and even some of the most stupendous kind, as may be seen in his *Life* by Mr. Gagnier, the most authentic (I had almost said, the only authentic one) of all those that are extant. But

To return to Mr. Chubb; though I might be excused taking any further Notice of his long and intricate Reasonings upon this Supposition, that other invisible spiritual Beings, besides God, can perform Miracles, since I have fully proved (I hope) that God alone is the immediate efficient Cause of them; yet I am willing to follow him through this Part of his *Discourse*, as there are several Things which ought by no Means to be passed by unexamined.

Admitting that superior invisible Beings can, of themselves work true Miracles, God will never suf- His *fifth Section* is wholly taken up in enquiring whether (supposing that there are invisible superior Agents capable of working Miracles) God will suffer them to exert such a Power for the Delusion of Mankind. And here he says, *If we argue by Analogy, that is, if we infer from his Conduct in*

one

one Case, how he will act in another, then it ^{for them to} is plain that God will suffer invisible Agents to ^{exert such} exert their Power in serving what Purposes ^{a Power} they please. But how does he make it out? ^{for the De-} ^{lusion of} Mankind.

Why, it seems, Men are at Liberty, and do actually delude one another in every kind of Delusion, in Points of the utmost Consequence, and sometimes for the bare Pleasure of deluding: From whence arises a strong Probability, that all invisible Agents are likewise at Liberty to do the same. And as God does not interpose to prevent the Delusion in the first Case, so he thinks that he neither does it in the second. For, says he, *it must be equally as fit in the Nature of the Thing for God to restrain it, seeing Delusion is the same in itself, and as bad in its Consequences to the Person deluded, whether the Power, which is the Ground of that Delusion, be natural or supernatural.*

But this I utterly deny: There is a vast Difference between the two supposed Cases. In the *first*, Men are a Match for each other; they may, if they will, make use of their natural Faculties, avoid being misguided and deluded; and upon this are founded, both our Saviour's Caution, to *beware of false*
P 3
Christs,

Christs, and false Prophets, and the Precepts of the Apostles to Prove all Things, to Try the Spirits whether they are of God, &c. for these Exhortations would be to no Purpose, if there were not a natural Ability in us to distinguish between Truth and Falshood, real Miracles and Impostures. In the *second Case*, the Delusion is unavoidable, because backed with real Miracles ; for except the Doctrine be plainly repugnant to Reason, the Evidence of Miracles leads naturally, and indeed necessarily, to the Belief of what they are intended to confirm. And therefore *it is fit in the Nature of the Thing*, or agreeable to the Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice of God, that he should exercise his restraining Power in the *latter Case*, and not in the *former*. “ It is Men’s Business to guard against the Errors into which they may be seduced by other Men,” says the celebrated Mr. Fontenelle^a ; “ but it is not in their Power to provide against the Delusions of superior Genii. My Reason is sufficient to discover whether a Statue speaks, or not ; but if I find that it really speaks, I cannot help ascribing to it some divine Virtue. In

^a Hist. des Oracles, Ch. v.

“ short,

“ short, God is not obliged by the Laws of
 “ his Goodness to preserve me from any
 “ other Seductions, but those from which I
 “ am not able to preserve myself; as for the
 “ others, my Reason ought to exert it-
 “ self.”

This Answer is so very natural, and so much to the purpose, that Mr. Chubb himself could not help taking Notice of it. For he says, that *it may be urged that invisible Agents, with respect to their Understandings and Power, are what Men are not an equal Match for; and that if God should permit such Agents to exert their Power for the Delusion of Mankind, this would be to expose the Generality of Mankind to such Evils and Mischiefs, as they are not qualified to guard against; and that therefore it becomes the Wisdom and Goodness of God to interpose, and prevent those Evils, by restraining invisible Agents from using their Power as aforesaid.* But then he is so far from being satisfied with it, that he takes up several Pages in making a most curious Reply to it. He observes first, that “ as it is a popular Argument drawn from the moral Perfections of God, so it may, in a Multitude of Instances, be turned against them. Almost every Tribe of Animals, *says* he,

he, may take up their Complaint, and say, that they are exposed to a Multitude of Evils and Inconveniencies, through the superior Capacities of Men, or of other Animals, which they are not an equal Match for; and that if God were a wise and good Being, he would kindly interpose, &c." And here the *Fly* is introduced, complaining in a most pathetick Speech, both of the *Spider* that lays Snares to catch her, which she is not able to guard against, and of God who does not *mercifully prevent her falling into so great an Evil*. But can any thing be more ridiculous? Is then the Case of Animals below us, destitute of Reason, and consequently of Religion, and of all Hopes of a future everlasting Happiness, parallel to that of Men with respect to superior Beings, who, if they are possessed of a Miracle-working Power, may deceive them to their *eternal* Hurt? And are the Evils which Brutes receive either from Men, or from their own Kind, to be compared with those which Men may be exposed to by the *unavoidable* Delusion of superior invisible Agents? I am almost ashamed to answer such pitiful Reasonings.

The next Instance brought in, is as little to the Purpose, and may be as easily confuted.

futed. *A Slave who is forced to bear or suffer many Evils and Miseries from the superior Power, which a tyrannical Governor is possessed of, has no reason to say, that if God were wise and good, he would interpose, and restrain such a Power; because those Evils and Miseries are but temporal, and not destructive of his true eternal Happiness; nay, they may effectually contribute to it, and be better for him upon the whole; which can never be said of a fatal Delusion in Religion, backed with the Power of Miracles.*

Mr. Chubb goes on; and in order to shew that Men are not a Match for each other, even with regard to Seduction in Matters of Religion, he alledges the Case of *Mahomet*, whose Imposture prevailed in a short Time over a great Part of the World; though indeed he is very unwilling to call him an *Impostor*, for fear of offending the *Mahometans*, till he has been *proved* so, and therefore only *supposes* it for Argument's Sake; as if this was not already done to his Hand, or plain enough of itself. But however, this Case can be of no Service to him; for *Mahomet's* Religion was not supported by Miracles, as the Delusion by superior invisible Agents is here supposed to be; he did not so much
as

as pretend to such a Power, as has been observed before. And the many Absurdities, Inconsistencies, sensual Notions and Maxims contained in it, together with the immoral Character of its Author, and the unnatural uncharitable Manner in which it was propagated, were very plain Evidences of its being a mere Imposture; so that none could be deceived in that respect, but those that would be so. And therefore the Wisdom and Goodness of God were no more concerned in preventing this Imposture, though it has prevailed never so far and so long, than they are in preventing all moral Evil in general.

Mr. Chubb himself acknowledges, that
 “ Man is endowed with a Faculty of Under-
 “ standing; by the right Use and Exercise of
 “ which, he is qualified to guard against
 “ the *Mahometan*, or any other Delusion,
 “ provided it be not backed with the Power
 “ of an invisible Agent, in working Mira-
 “ cles for its Confirmation.” If so, this last
 Instance, and all his Reasonings from Ana-
 logy, signify nothing. And yet he goes on
 arguing, and perplexing the Subject; and ob-
 serves, “ that the Generality of Men are so
 “ far from using and following their Under-
 “ standings

“standings in this particular, that, on the
 “contrary, they are too apt to follow every
 “one who takes upon him to guide them,
 “and are very easily misled and deluded; *so*
 “*that the honest, plain, simple part of Man-*
 “*kind, are not an equal Match for the more*
 “*subtile and crafty*.” But this is a mis-
 erable Evasion; for though the Generality of
 Mankind are so very liable to be imposed up-
 on, yet it does not follow that therefore they
 are not an equal Match for Seducers of all
 kinds, when not supported by a Miracle-
 working Power; because it is always in their
 Power to discover the Cheat, and guard
 against it; and if they do suffer themselves
 to be deluded, it is entirely owing to their
 Inattention, Indolence, Prejudice, and the
 like, and therefore their own Fault; so that
 there is no manner of reason for God to in-
 terpose in such a Case; or rather, it would
 be very *unfit*, since their Delusion is a natu-
 ral and just Punishment of their want of Di-
 ligence, and Inquiry, of Honesty, and Love
 of Truth. Besides, it is so far from being
 true, *that the honest, plain, simple Part of*
Mankind are not an equal Match for the more
subtile and crafty, that it is quite the Re-

^a P. 23.

verse;

verse; for they are certainly of all Men the best qualified to avoid any material Deception in Religion; their very Honesty and plain way of acting will render them the more attentive to any new Doctrine that is proposed to them, and the more cautious of embracing it, for fear of being fatally deluded; and a moderate Degree of Attention and Caution, with a common Share of good Sense, will soon enable them to see through the best contrived Imposture, and to avoid it. It is an Affectation of Wit and Learning, the Love of Novelty and Distinction, Pride and Ambition, Lust and Passion, Inattention and an Indifference towards Truth (from all which the *honest plain* Part of Mankind are free, or else they would not be *plain and honest*) that leads Men into Error, and makes them the Sport of every Delusion and Imposition in religious Matters. And therefore our Saviour gives us this very Observation, as a plain Rule to go by, *If any Man will do his Will, i.e. God's Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*^a. From whence it clearly follows, contrary to Mr. Chubb's Conclusion in this Place, that *the divine Wisdom*

^a John vii. 17.

and Goodness are NOT equally concerned in preventing the Delusion of Mankind, whether it proceeds from an invisible superior Agent, backed with the Power of Miracles, or from Men destitute of that Power; and that consequently, though God does not interpose in the second Case, yet a very good Argument can be drawn from his Wisdom and Goodness, to prove, that he will interpose in the first.

What he adds, that *all Intelligent free Beings, whether visible or invisible, will be at Liberty, whilst they are Agents, to exercise their natural Abilities in serving what Purposes they please; take away that Liberty, and their Agency ceases, or is destroyed; is nothing to the Purpose, because they may be restrained in some particular Cases, without ceasing to be free Agents, as he supposes. God may prevent invisible Beings from exerting their superior Power upon extraordinary Occasions, i. e. when it would be made use of for the Delusion of Mankind; and yet not take away their Liberty. The actual Exercise of it would, it is true, be hindered in such a Case; but the Faculty itself would still remain, and act upon all other Occasions, just as we see in Men: They are often prevented*

vented by a superior Force, from exerting their own natural Strength ; Does it therefore follow that they are not free Agents, or that their Liberty is thereby *destroyed* ? The greatest Slave in the World, though he be generally forced to *act against his Will*, still retains his *original Freedom*, the Freedom of his Mind ; he can still, within himself, approve and prefer what he thinks Right, and condemn and reject what he thinks Wrong ; and whenever he is made Free, he will exert the same Power of Freedom, have the same Liberty of Action, as he that never had been a Slave ; and therefore his Liberty is not, cannot be *destroyed* by all the Restraint that is put upon him. Now, if it be so, how can Mr. Chubb from the forementioned Premises, draw this Conclusion, *that to say, it is morally unfit for God to suffer his Creatures to Delude or Injure one another, is the same as to say, that it is morally unfit for God to call free Creatures into Being* ? No ! It is not *the same*, since his Creatures will still retain their Power of Freedom, and act freely in every Thing else. Besides, according to this Way of Arguing, God *can* never put any Restraint upon his intelligent Creatures, or
 exercise

exercise any Power, and have any Influence over them; to say which is to *destroy* his Providence, and supreme Dominion. And, indeed, by what follows it is plain that Mr. *Chubb* is not much inclined to admit any such Thing. But before I come to examine this more particularly, I must observe two Things, *First*, That he speaks here of *Delusion* in general, which, to be sure, God is not always concerned to prevent; whereas, the Question is about that *particular* Sort of *Delusion* by superior, invisible Beings, which is supposed to be backed with Miracles, and which God is always concerned to prevent, because it is unavoidable, if it be true that Miracles are a proper Attestation of a divine Mission. *Secondly*, That this Author himself has owned before ^a, that *if God interposes in any Case, then it is to be presumed that he will give Truth the Victory*; which is as much as to say, that he will not suffer an *invincible* Delusion to take Place among Mankind. But then, for fear one should take the least Advantage from this Concession, he immediately adds, that *the Question will still remain, whether he does interpose or not, seeing the Prevalency of Power is not, neither can it*

^a P. 15.

be,

be, a Proof that it is Divine. This is all so very extraordinary, that I hardly know what to make of it; and I really much doubt, whether the Author himself knew what he was about, except he had a Mind to puzzle his Readers, and make them stare. Admitting that *the Prevalency of Power is not a Proof that it is Divine*, must the Question, *Whether God interposes, or not*, still remain undecided? Are there no other Arguments to prove his *Interposál*, or his divine Providence? Have we not many direct and convincing ones, drawn from his moral Perfections, his infinite Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice, and from the manifest Necessity of future Rewards and Punishments? But these, it seems, are thought inconclusive by Mr. Chubb, in his *Dissertation on Providence*; and though, I am sure, he is very far from having proved them so, I will wave them for the present, and only insist upon that which he rejects in *this Place*, without giving any Reason for it, *viz. that the Prevalency of Power is a Proof that it is Divine.* Indeed Superiority of Power, considered in itself, and abstractedly from all particular Circumstances, is only an Indication of a superior Agent:

Agent ; but if it be attended with great Marks of Wisdom, Goodness, and Beneficence ; if it be exerted in Confirmation of a true and excellent Doctrine, supposed to come from God, and for the Reformation and Happiness of Mankind, then we may be sure it proceeds either from God himself, or (which is all one) from some other invisible superior Being commissioned by him ; since it is utterly improbable that a supernatural Power, thus circumstanced, should have any other Cause, as will more fully appear by and by. Let me observe farther, that Mr. Chubb's Assertion, that *the Prevalency of Power is not, neither can it be, a Proof, that it is Divine*, is entirely grounded upon the Supposition that God does not interpose in human Affairs, and, therefore, a downright begging the Question. For if God be concerned in preventing the Delusion of Mankind, occasioned by a supernatural Act of Power, (which is the Point in Debate) he must of Consequence, oppose and restrain the Exertion of any such Power ; and then *the Prevalency of Power*, in any Case, will always be *a Proof that it is Divine*. Thus, the Superiority of the Miracles of Moses over those of the Egyptian Magicians,

Q

gicians, (admitting that they performed true Miracles, which must be in Mr. Chubb's *Hypothesis*) plainly shewed that he was sent from God.

But this Writer, in order to embarrass the Subject still farther, or rather to overthrow at any Rate the natural Notions of a divine *Interposál*, or Providence, takes quite another Course; and though he has hitherto strenuously contended for the free Exercise of the miraculous Power of superior, invisible Agents, among Mankind, he now endeavours to prove the contrary, being sensible that if these Agents interest themselves in human Affairs, much more ought God to interpose. His Argument is this, *If invisible Agents can, and sometimes do, exercise their Power as aforesaid, then there is just Ground to presume that they frequently do so, because they have frequent Occasions and Opportunities for it; but, whereas it is evident they SELDOM (if ever) do; therefore it is highly probable that they DO NOT exercise their Power here AT ALL.* But how does he know that they have frequent Opportunities for it? Why, it seems, because the Transactions which take Place amongst Mankind are generally

nerally a Round of the same Things, so that the Motives to Action in invifible Beings, drawn from thence, muft occur frequently. Surely this Author has a peculiar Art of altering, and evading the Question; he constantly mistakes particular, for general Cafes. The Question is about *general* Delufions in Religion, or the Eftablifhment and Propagation of false Religions, under the Name of divine Revelations, which is a Cafe that happens but *feldom*; but Mr. Chubb fpeaks of the *common ordinary* Tranfactions of Mankind, which therefore *frequently* happen: Is this *Logic*, and fair Dealing? But farther, May not fuperior, invifible Agents intereft themfelves in fuch a Cafe, without intermeddling in the common Affairs of Men? And, is it not *highly probable*, that evil Spirits (if poffeffed with a Miracle-working Power, and not reftained in the Exercife of it) will fupport Delufions of fo fatal a Confequence, with all their Might, fince this is perfectly agreeable to their own Inclination and Intereft? This Author fays, that *it is evident they feldom (if ever) do exert their Power upon this Globe*; But how is it evident? only becaufe *in many Inftances in which it has been pretended that fuch Power has been exercifed,*

it has been shewn to be no other than Juggle, or Imposture; for this is all the Proof he gives us of so extraordinary an Assertion. But does it follow, that because there are *many* idle Stories about invisible Beings acting upon this Globe, or *many* Cheats have been discovered in that Respect; does it follow, I say, that therefore they *seldom*, or *never* interpose? Or, admitting that they do but *seldom* interpose, is the *Infrequency* of their Action a Proof that they do not act *at all*? How absurd soever this Way of Reasoning may be, the Author is not ashamed to make use of it, in order to overthrow at once, the Credit of all the Miracles recorded in Scripture.

For he observes * by way of *Reply*, to the foregoing Argument, but in Effect to confirm it, and apply it to his particular Purpose, that “ if it proves any Thing, it proves
 “ too much, because it concludes as strongly
 “ ly against God’s exercising his Power in
 “ enabling Men to work Miracles *at any*
 “ *Time*, seeing it is *seldom* (if ever) that he
 “ does; the Occasions, and Excitements re-
 “ turning as *frequently*, and thereby as *frequently*
 “ becoming the Grounds and Rea-

* P. 26.

“ sons of Action to *him*, as to *any other* invisible Being.” Had Mr. Chubb stopt here, and left out the *Parenthesis* (if ever), which seems to intimate, that God *never did* enable Men to work Miracles, or at least to render it doubtful; this might pass for an Answer. But in order to make it serve his Turn, he goes on and says, that *if Miracles are at any Time used to convince Men of the divine Original of a Revelation; then, when Men grow sceptical and incredulous as to the Truth of those Facts, and consequently, are doubtful with Regard to the Divinity of that Revelation; when this is the Case, then new Miracles become as useful, and serve the same Purposes as those before, viz. to Work the Conviction of Mankind: And it would be equally as kind and good in God to give them in the latter, as in the former Case.* From whence he concludes, that *whereas he does not do it in the latter, this affords an Argument against his having done it in the former; i. e. against the Truth of all the Miracles of Moses, and the Prophets, Christ, and his Apostles.*

Should Mr. Chubb complain here ^a, that

^a The Reader will remember that I have already said in my Preface, that these Papers were wrote before Mr Chubb's Death.

I have all along represented as his own Sentiments, the Objections, which he only proposes, as naturally arising from the Subject, and to which, he even makes the best Answers he can; I must be so free as to tell him, that if he had done this *fairly*, I should have been very far from finding Fault with him: But really, there appears throughout his Performance, such a Partiality in this Respect, he lays so much Stress upon the Objections, and seems to take so much Delight in setting them off; and the Answers he makes to them are generally so slight and trivial, or so short and lame, that I cannot help thinking he speaks his own Mind in the *former*, and laughs in his Sleeve at the *latter*. I have already given some *Specimens* of it, but here is one which deserves a particular Notice. All the Answer he gives to the foregoing Objection is, that *God is not in Justice obliged to repeat Miracles for the Conviction of Mankind, when he has once given them for that End*^a. And, without troubling himself to make it good, he immediately adds by Way of Reply, *that it is not Justice, but Goodness, which is the Spring of Action to God in all such Cases, — and that it*

^a P. 26.*would*

would be equally as good in him, to exercise his Power in one Case, as in the other. To which I answer, that *Goodness* must always be directed by *Wisdom* and *Justice*, and that therefore these two last Attributes are the Springs of Action to God in all such Cases, as well as *Goodness*. If it be neither *fit*, nor *just*, that God should daily Work new Miracles in favour of those who grow *sceptical and incredulous as to the Truth of the Gospel History* (as I shall shew presently that it is not); then, I am sure, his *Goodness* can never prompt him to such a *Condescension*. But admitting that *Goodness* is in this Case the only Spring of Action to God, does it follow that it would be equally as good in him to repeat Miracles *now*, for the Conviction of Unbelievers, as it was to work them *at first*, for the Establishment of his Revelation? Are the two Cases parallel? No surely; there is a very great Difference. In the *former*, Miracles were absolutely necessary, since Men could never, without them, have been able to satisfy themselves of the divine Original of the Gospel; in the *latter*, there are already standing Proofs, or at least, strong Probabilities and Presumptions in favour of it, and therefore *it would not be*

equally good in God to exercise his Power in one Case, as in the other.

Mr. Chubb, it is true, alledges another Reason, no less conclusive than the first, in answer to the before-mentioned Objection, *viz. that the Frequency of Miracles would render them useless.* But then, he only just touches upon it, and that, as if he was afraid to say too much; and in order to disprove it, he immediately adds, *that it may be yet farther replied, that the Argument from Miracles is just the same, whether they take Place seldom or often; whether in every Age, or only in twenty, or in an hundred Ages:* Which is so visibly contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things, that nothing but the strongest Partiality could induce him to make such a Reply. But, lest he should retort it upon me, I shall here put together the strongest Reasons that can be alledged against the repeating of Miracles, for the Conviction of Unbelievers; though my Readers, I believe, would easily dispense with it, considering that it has been already so often, and so well done by very eminent Authors, whom Mr. Chubb himself must have read, if he has read any Thing at all on this Subject, and

from whom he should have learnt how to do it Justice. I observe therefore,

First, That if the Proofs which we have, at this Distance of Time, of the Truth of the Miracles recorded in the Gospel, be *sufficient* to determine our Belief, then the repeating of the same Miracles in Favour of any Man, or any Set of Men, must be *unnecessary*, and nothing can be more unreasonable than to require, or expect it. I shall not here enlarge upon those Proofs, but shall take it for granted, that we have in this Respect a *sufficient Evidence*, which will fully appear in the Sequel of this *Treatise*. The Evidence of *Sense* is, no doubt, greater than that of *Testimony*; but does it follow, that therefore *Testimony* can afford no *sufficient Evidence*, or that God is obliged to give Men in this Respect the *greatest Evidence* possible? Is not *Testimony*, when properly supported, a reasonable Ground of Assent? To deny this, is to say that we must believe no *Fact* but what we see with our own Eyes, hear with our own Ears, and are present at the Transaction of; which would at once destroy all History, render all the Monuments of Antiquity useless and insignificant, and reduce us at last to an universal *Scepticism*,
 nay,

may, to a perfect *Inactivity* in Life; for in that Case, we should neither eat, nor drink, nor transact any Business, nor apply ourselves to any Calling, nor do any Thing for the Preservation of ourselves, and Families, or of the Civil Society; because we have no *sensible*, or *absolute Demonstration* that these Things will have the intended Effect, or, even, that they will not prove hurtful and destructive in the End. If it be said, that in all these, and the like Cases, a common Degree of *Probability* may suffice, because no better Proof can be had, and the Nature of Things requires an immediate Determination, but that a much greater Evidence is necessary to satisfy us of the divine Original of a Revelation, considering that it is a Matter of the utmost Concern, about which we may, without any visible, immediate Danger, suspend our Judgment, till we have this Evidence; I answer, that I see no Reason for it, and that very good Reasons may be alledged against it, as I shall shew quickly. Indeed, a greater Degree of Attention and Care is required in weighing this Kind of Evidence in the latter, than in the former Case; by so much the more, as Religion excels all worldly Concerns; but yet,

it will equally serve, and is of equal Force to determine our Assent in both.

Secondly, This superior Evidence, I mean that of *Sense*, so much insisted on, is incompatible with the Virtue of *Faith*, and the State of *Probation*, in which Providence has placed us here below. There is, there can be no *Merit* in believing what one actually sees, and hears, and feels, *i. e.* what one cannot help believing. For this Kind of Proof is *irresistible*, or such as forces our Assent, whether we will, or no; and it requires no Pains to be convinced of it, nay, Conviction follows of Course. As *Faith* is not in this Case *free*, or an Effect of our own Choice, it can never be accounted *Virtuous*, or *Praise-worthy*, nor, consequently, deserve any Reward at the Hands of the Almighty. But, when, upon the *Evidence of Testimony*, we give our Assent to Facts, which, supposing them to be true, are a clear Confirmation of a Religion said to come from God; then such a Faith is truly commendable, and meritorious: Because, *first*, it requires, or supposes a diligent Enquiry into the Matter, a great Impartiality and Love of Truth, in weighing the Arguments on both Sides, and an honest Heart

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in freely yielding to that which appears the more probable, and the better grounded, though never so contrary to our Prejudices, or vicious Inclinations: And, *secondly*, because this Kind of Evidence, I mean that which results from *Testimony* only, may be called in Question, contested, and therefore *resisted*; for though it be *morally*, yet it is not *absolutely* certain, or so certain that the contrary is *impossible* in Nature, or implies a *Contradiction*. So that our assenting to it is entirely the Result of a diligent impartial Search after Truth, and consequently, of a free reasonable Choice. The State which we are now in, was designed by Providence to be a State of *Probation*, for the Improvement of our natural reasonable Powers, as well as for the Exercise of our Virtues. But if Miracles must be daily repeated for the Conviction of Mankind; if *Faith* must depend on the Evidence of Sense, that is on *irrefragable* Proofs, Where would be the *Trial*? How can our Understanding, our Wisdom, our Honesty be tried, in the Choice of a Religion, if no room is left for Choice, if we are forced to believe, whether we will or no, which has been shewn before to be the Case? In short, as there

is no *Virtue*, so there can be no *Trial*, in such a *Faith* as this.

Thirdly, The Sight of a *new* Miracle might not *in Fact* be more convincing, no, nor even so convincing, as the standing Proofs which we have of those *formerly* wrought in Confirmation of the Gospel. For though the *Evidence of Sense* be, in itself, greater than that of *Testimony*, yet if that of *Testimony* be sufficient to determine a reasonable Man (as I have before shewn it is); What can the *Sceptical* and *Incredulous* desire more? And is not their being dissatisfied with it a sure Mark of Obstinacy, or Unwillingness to believe, which would equally stand out against a greater Evidence, when liable to Suspicions and Doubts, as that of *Sense* is, and must always be. The more a Miracle surprized and amazed them, the more they would guard against it, for that very Reason. A Man of that Cast, makes it his constant Rule not to believe his own Senses, when he is not perfectly calm and sedate. Should he see one of his Acquaintance rise from the Dead, after a certain given Time, he would not yield to the Testimony of his own Eyes; but would suppose that what he saw, or imagined he saw,

saw, was the Effect of the Perturbation of his Mind, that there was some Mistake, or Delusion in the Case ; that it was all a Dream, the Fancy of a wandering Imagination : Or, if he had so much Ingenuity left, as to own that there might be, after all, some Truth in the Matter, he would think it his Duty to suspend his Judgment till he had considered it better. In the mean while, the Impression of the Miracle would decrease, and grow weaker and weaker ; Time, and a Succession of other Objects, would wear it out by degrees. And then the Evidence arising from it must lie under the same Disadvantage with the actual Proof which we have of our Saviour's Miracles, that is, to be distant, and out of Sight. So that unless God should work every Day new Miracles, in Confirmation of those that are past ; one or two, wrought at a Distance, would be of little or no Signification.

Let me observe farther, that should an Infidel himself see a new Miracle, he can only have the Deposition of his own Senses for the Proof of it, which may be faulty, and are certainly liable to Mistake. But in the Case before us, he has the concurrent Testimony of several Persons, in their right Minds,

Minds, supported by the greatest Marks of Sincerity and Honesty, that can be desired ; not concerning one or two Miracles only, but a vast Number, and in great Variety, done openly before their Eyes, in different Places, and Countries : And besides this, he has some other corroborating Circumstances, or Proofs, such as the *wonderful Propagation of the Gospel*, destitute of all *human Means* to support it, and contrary to all *human Probability* and Appearance ; which can never be accounted for, but by admitting a *supernatural Assistance*, or the Truth of the Miracles wrought at first in Confirmation of it. Such again is *the Completion of several remarkable Prophecies*, (which are a Kind of Miracles) ; especially that of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the Dispersion of the *Jews* all over the World, which we actually see with our own Eyes, and is a standing Monument of the Truth of the Gospel History. All these add so many new Degrees of Evidence to the Proof taken from the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, by which it greatly surpasses the Evidence which would result from one or two new Miracles done for the Conviction of Infidels. And therefore, as it is not in the least probable

bable, that they who will not yield to the strongest Argument, should be wrought upon by the weakest; we may be sure that they would *equally*, if not rather *more readily*, stand out against this sensible Evidence. The Case of the *Jews*, who could not, or would not be convinced by all the Miracles of *Christ*, of which they were Eye-witnesses, makes it highly probable, if not certain, that the renewing of them would have no better Success upon the *Sceptical and Incredulous*. But,

Fourthly, If new Miracles are as *useful* and as *necessary now* for the Conviction of Mankind, as they were *at first*, which is what Mr *Chubb* supposes; then Miracles must be repeated every Day, in every Place, all over the World, and in Favour of every Man living, to the End of the World; for all Men have an equal Right (if they have any at all) to this extraordinary Evidence; at which Rate, our Saviour must have appeared, and wrought Miracles, not only in *Judaea*, but in all the rest of the World, and continue to do so daily, in all After-ages. He must have shewed himself after his Resurrection, not only to the *Sanhedrim*, and the whole Nation of the *Jews*, but also to the Emperor,

Emperor, and Senate of *Rome*; to the *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, and to every Individual ever since: And in order to this, he must die and rise every Day; the Number of Persons born Blind, of Lepers, of the Lame, the Maimed, or the Afflicted with any other incurable Disease, of the possessed with the Devil, &c. must pretty nearly equal that of the Sound and Healthy, that they may be miraculously wrought upon and cured; dead Men must rise every Day, and the same Persons many Times, to satisfy severally, or by Turns, all those who were not Eye-witnesses of their being first raised from the Grave. All which is so very absurd and unreasonable, that it sufficiently confutes itself. And this leads me to observe,

Fifthly, That such a frequent Repetition of Miracles, all over the World, would be so far from adding to the Evidence which we have already of the Truth of those wrought at first in Confirmation of the Gospel, that it would absolutely destroy all the Evidence arising from them. For if Miracles be *extraordinary* Operations, or Operations *out of the common Course of Things*, as is agreed on all Hands; should they happen every Day, and every where, they would be no more

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extraordinary, or out of the common Course, and so they would cease to be Miracles, at least with respect to us. Men accustomed to the Sight of them, would look upon them as the Effects of natural Causes only, and be no more affected by them, than they are by the rising and setting of the Sun, or any other Phænomenon of Nature. And then, Miracles could no more serve for the Purpose for which they were designed, viz. to be a plain Attestation of a divine Mission, but would become entirely useless. And therefore what Mr. Chubb objects, that the Argument from Miracles is just the same, whether they take Place seldom, or often, whether in every Age, or only in twenty, or an hundred Ages, is so far from being true, that the Reverse is plain and incontestable.

But perhaps he will say that I have strained the Point, by supposing such a Frequency of Miracles as I have now done, and that a few performed here and there, *when Men grow sceptical and incredulous*, would suffice. To which I answer, that I have already shewn by several Considerations, that one or two Miracles, done at remote Distances, would never effectually convince any one Infidel; and indeed, if we examine the
Case

Case a little more narrowly, we shall find that it must be just as I have represented it. The Number of *sceptical* and *incredulous* Men has been, God knows! but too great, since the Publication of Christianity: No Age, no Place has been free from them; wherever the Gospel has been preached, it has been opposed and rejected by Unbelievers of all Kinds, and all Conditions; and it is more than probable that they daily encrease, and who can tell how long this may continue? Now, if nothing can satisfy every one of these but the Sight of new Miracles, and God is obliged to gratify them so far as to work them, is it not plain, that Miracles must be repeated every Day, and every where, as long as ever an incredulous Person remains? And as this must be in order to convince them of the Truth of those formerly wrought by our Saviour and his Apostles, must not *the same Kind* of Miracles be repeated over and over? For probably *different* Miracles would not do it; Exceptions would be made, Suspicions raised, and Difficulties started, which would render them useless. And therefore, to prevent all Cavils, and, as it were, *force the Sceptical and Incredulous* to believe, our Saviour, according

to this preposterous Scheme, must, as I said before, appear again, and do the same Miracles over again, as he did in *Judea*; nay must die and rise again daily, in every *Christian* Country, Town, and Village, before every Individual, and to the End of the World. Besides, as all Men have an equal Right to this most extraordinary Favour, they may equally desire it; some to confirm their Faith, and render it unshaken; others to dispel all their Doubts, and fix them for ever in the Belief of Christianity; and others to be the sooner enabled to embrace it when first proposed to them; so that the Number of Miracles must of Course increase proportionably, and as it were, *ad infinitum*. And this brings me to observe,

Lastly, That no Reason can be assigned why *Unbelievers* should be thus far privileged. Is it because they are *Unbelievers*, and cannot be convinced by any other Means? This is so far from recommending them to such a Favour, that it ought naturally, and according to all the Rules of Justice and Equity, to exclude them from it. Is it just, that those who will not be convinced by an Evidence sufficient to satisfy a reasonable Man, should be indulged so far as to have

new

new Miracles wrought every Day before their Eyes for their Satisfaction? Is it just that those who shew such an *Unwillingness* to believe, upon the *most probable* Grounds, a Religion so excellent in itself, and so visibly calculated for the Happiness of Mankind, should be in a manner *forced* to receive it by *superior irresistible* Arguments? In short, is it just that those who reject and despise the Means of Conviction which they *already* have, should be favoured with *new* and *more extraordinary* ones? Do they not rather deserve to be deprived even of these, and left to their own unnatural perverse Tempers; according to the *Saying* of our Saviour, which is founded on plain Reason and Equity, *Whosoever hath not, or makes no Use of what he hath, i. e. of the Talents and Means of Instruction and Salvation, which he has already received, (for in that Case it is just the same as if he had received nothing) from him shall be taken away even that he hath?* Surely, he that actually believes, or is disposed, or at least, is not averse to believe, is better and worthier than he who cannot be prevailed upon to embrace Christianity, by the greatest Evidence that can be reasonably desired. And shall we suppose the righteous Judge of all

* Matt. xiii. 12.

the Earth to be guilty of such a Partiality, as to do *more* for those who deserve *less*, and *less* for those who deserve *more*? *That be far from us!* The Nature and Reason of Things, therefore, plainly shew, that it is both *absurd* and *unjust* to insist upon the *Evidence of Sense*, that is to say, upon *new Miracles*, for the Conviction of those who will not believe the Truth of the Gospel-History.

Thus have I offered, in one View, the most material Considerations that have been, or that I conceive can be, alledged in Answer to the Objection proposed by Mr. Chubb; of which however (such is his great Impartiality) he takes not the least Notice, but leaves the Objection in its full Force, and then draws this very extraordinary Conclusion, *From the Whole of what has been here offered, it may be thought just to infer, that if the Seldomness of invisible Agents acting upon this Globe, affords an Argument against their acting here at all; then, as God seldom, if ever, interposes to enable Men to work Miracles, from hence arises a Probability, that he NEVER DOES:* Or, in other Words, that there NEVER WAS, NOR EVER CAN BE any such Thing as a *Miracle*. But this reasoning from

Analogy

Analogy is throughout fallacious. It is founded upon the Supposition, that the Grounds and Motives of Action, both to invisible Beings, and to God, *frequently* occur in this Case; which I have before proved to be entirely false. And therefore, though in the *Christian Scheme*, God *seldom* interposes to enable Men to work Miracles, *no* Probability arises from hence that he *never* does. Besides, this pretended *Analogy* has no manner of Foundation. For, admitting *that the Seldomness of invisible Agents acting upon this Globe, affords an Argument against their acting here at all*; yet it will not follow, that the *Seldomness* of God's acting so, makes it *probable* that HE *never* interposes in working Miracles; because the Grounds of Action to both, in this Case, may be *different*; and so they are *in fact*, at least with respect to *evil Spirits*, supposing we allow them to have a Miracle-working Power of their own. The visible Interest of their Kingdom, and their desperate Malice must naturally prompt them to repeat, and multiply Miracles for the more effectual and continual Delusion of Mankind; and the Opportunities of doing it, and proper Instruments for it, cannot fail them, the World being at all Times sufficiently stock-

ed with Cheats and Impostors, or with People ready to seduce their Fellow-Creatures into wicked Principles and Practices. But God's Method being *quite different*, and he having good Reasons for not repeating Miracles, as I have shewn before, the Grounds of Action to him, in this Case, must be *quite different* also; and the Occasions and Opportunities for it occur but *seldom*: And therefore, the *Seldomness* of his Interposal to enable Men to work Miracles, is *no Proof*, nor affords the least *Probability*, that he *never* does interpose.

But Mr. *Chubb*, to make the most he can of the Difficulties which attend this Subject, goes on, and says, that "supposing there
 " are *other* invisible Agents *besides* God, which
 " act upon this Globe; then Miracles prove
 " *nothing* with respect to the *Divinity* of a
 " Revelation, because it will always be *un-*
 " *certain*, whether God be the Agent in
 " producing them, or no." So that, it seems, there is no *Medium*; we must either deny that there are such invisible Agents, or else own that Miracles prove nothing in the present Case. To which he answers, *first*, that
 " there is no Principle in Nature or Reason,
 " from whence the Non-existence of those
 " invisible

“ invisible Beings may be *certainly* inferred.
“ And *secondly*, that though, with respect to
“ any Miracle, we cannot be *certain* that
“ God is the Agent in producing it; yet, if
“ the Circumstances which attend the Case
“ render it *probable* that he did, then it will
“ follow, that though Miracles cannot af-
“ ford *certain*, yet they may afford *probable*
“ *Proofs* in Favour of the Divinity of a Re-
“ velation.” But this Answer, in my humble
Opinion, is very far from being satisfactory,
and seems to be calculated with no other
View, than to bring the Evidence arising
from Miracles as low as possible, even to
the lowest Degree of *Probability*; which
does still more visibly appear by the Se-
quel of his *Discourse*. For, let me ask him,
would it not have been much more to the
Purpose to reply, that the Existence and Ac-
tion of invisible Agents upon this Globe,
may be admitted, without allowing them a
natural inherent Power of working Mira-
cles? There is no necessary Consequence from
the one to the other, and it is plain enough,
from what I have said upon this Subject, that
they have no such Power. But moreover, sup-
posing they had, yet if good Spirits *will not*
exert

exert it, but when they are commissioned by God ; and evil Spirits *cannot* do it, without his Permission (which has been shewn before to be the Case) ; then all true Miracles must be look'd upon as his own Work, and consequently (when applied to that Use) not as a *probable*, but, at least for those who are Eye-Witnesses of them, as a *certain* Proof of the *Divinity* of a Revelation.

A Man endowed with the Power of Miracles, is not at Liberty to use it well or ill, just as he pleases.

The next Thing Mr. Chubb examines is, *Whether a Man who may be said to work a Miracle* (as he has stated the Case,) *is at Liberty to use such Miracle-working Power well, or ill, and employ it in serving what Purposes he pleases.* And this Enquiry, he says, is in some Measure answered in the preceeding Section, in which it is observed, “ that Men “ will be at Liberty, whilst they are Agents, “ to exercise their natural Ability, in serving “ what Purposes they please ; for take away “ Liberty, and their Agency *ceases*, or is “ *destroyed*.” I shall not here repeat the Remarks I have made, in their proper Place, upon it ; but shall only take Notice of what he adds to prove the *affirmative* Side of the Question : *As this is the Case with respect to the natural Abilities of Men, so it must be the same with regard to all supernatural*

Power,

Power, which may be superadded, whether it be that of working Miracles, or otherwise^a. And why must it be the same? Because the Exercise of such Power depends upon a Man's Will; that is, in plain English, the Thing is so, because it is so: For the Point to be proved is, that the Miracle-working Power is at the Disposal of the Man who exerts it, so as to employ it in serving what Purposes he pleases; which is the same as to say, that it depends upon his Will; and therefore, to alledge the latter in Proof of the former, is plainly begging the Question. But further, I have shewn before (in examining the Conditions which Mr Chubb supposes in Miracles) that the Power of working them does not, neither can it depend upon a Man's Will; and indeed, had he considered it a little better, he would never have argued as he does here, from a natural to a supernatural Power. The former must be subject to Man's Will, else he could not be a free Agent, for it was given him in order that he might employ it in serving what Purposes he pleases. But the latter, being intended to serve some particular Ends of Providence, has nothing to do with his moral Agency,

^a P. 29.

which

which subsists independently of it; and therefore it does not depend upon his Will. For we must not imagine (as Mr *Chubb* seems to do) that this *supernatural Power* is, as it were, *infused* into a Man's Nature, so as to become *his own*, or be *superadded* to his natural Faculties (in which Case, no doubt, it must be at his Disposal); but it is exerted *immediately* by God, as Occasion requires, without any *Co-operation* on the Man's Part, who is therefore but a mere *instrumental*, or *occasional* Cause of the Miracles produced. Moreover, the natural Consequence of the contrary Supposition is such, as entirely destroys the Use of Miracles, and puts it out of God's POWER to reveal himself to Mankind that Way; and therefore this Supposition ought not to be admitted. Mr. *Chubb* himself allows the Consequence: "For, says he, if
 " he who works a Miracle, is at Liberty to
 " annex it to *Truth* or *Falshood*, of which
 " a By-stander cannot possibly be a Judge,
 " whether it be annexed to one, or the other
 " of these; then it will follow, that Miracles prove nothing in the present Case."
 Only, he observes in answer to it, *that this Conclusion may be thought too strong for the Premises*; but, by his Leave, it is not too
 strong;

strong; it *naturally*, and even *necessarily* follows from the Premises. For, if a By-stander cannot *possibly* be a Judge, whether a Miracle wrought be annexed to Truth or Falshood; then surely, the *natural, necessary* Inference will be, *that Miracles prove nothing at all, with respect to the Divinity of a Revelation*; and no Circumstances imaginable that may attend the Case, can render it probable, that such a Revelation comes from God, as Mr. Chubb here supposes: "For though, says he^a, "with respect to any Miracle, "we cannot be *certain* that it is annexed "to Truth, yet, if the Circumstances which "attend the Case, render it *probable* that it is, "then it will follow, that though Miracles "cannot afford *certain*, yet they may afford "probable Proof of the Divinity of a Revelation." However, let us see what those *Circumstances* are, according to him, and how far the Proof arising from them is *probable*.

"They must regard," he says^b, "either the *Fact itself*, or else the *Revelation* *itself* which the *Fact* is brought to vouch for. And as to the *Fact itself*, they must either regard the *Kind*, or *Degree* of *Power* which is exercised in that *Fact*,

There are Degrees of Power, which God can never communicate to a Creature; and therefore when exercised,

^a P. 30.

^b P. 35.

" or

they afford “ or else the Good, or Evil, which that
 a plain “ Power (considered abstractedly from the
 Proof of a “ Revelation) is *introductive* to, or is the
 divine In- “ Cause of.” As to the *First*, viz. the Kind,
 terposal.

“ *Cause of.*” As to the *First*, viz. the Kind, or Degree of Power which is exercised in a Miracle; he thinks, that nothing can be fairly concluded from hence, either *for*, or *against* its being wrought by God, rather than by some other invisible Agent. And why? — because, it seems, *there is not any Kind or Degree of Power, which may be exercised upon this Globe, (that of raising the Dead not excepted) but may be inherent to, and be the natural Result of the Constitution of some Creature, seeing God can, and, for any Thing we know, may have communicated such Kind, or Degree of Power* *. But this I utterly deny; we know, or *may* know, and *must* know, (if we know any Thing of the Matter) that there are *Kinds*, or *Degrees* of Power, which God *does not*, and, indeed, *cannot* communicate to *any* Being, so as that they should *be inherent to, or the natural Result of his Constitution*. Such are those of *Creation*, of *raising the Dead*, (though Mr. Chubb will not except it) which is a Kind of *Creation*; those of *knowing intimately Men's*

* P. 35.

Hearts;

Hearts, of infallibly foretelling future Contingencies, especially such as entirely depend upon the free Agency of Men, &c. According to all the Apprehensions we have of God's Attributes, he cannot communicate to any Creatures these superlative Degrees of Power, so as to render them their own, without divesting himself of a most distinguishing Prerogative, by which He alone can reveal himself to Mankind, either in a natural, or in a supernatural Way. For we can conceive no greater Works, or greater Marks of an infinite Power, than these; and to suppose finite Beings capable of them, to say that there is not any Kind or Degree of Power, which may be exercised upon this Globe, but may be inherent to, or the natural Result of the Constitution of some Creature, is to talk at an extravagant Rate. But, as I have said enough before to shew, that the natural inherent Ability, even of the most exalted Angel, can never extend so far, I shall not insist any longer upon it. Only, I must observe, that if it be so, the Kind, or Degree of Power, exercised in the beforementioned Cases and the like, affords not only a probable, but a certain Proof that it is divine, or exerted immediately by God himself;
even

even as *certain* as it is, that God cannot *divest* himself of his most *distinguishing* Prerogative, *i. e.* of the *Means* of revealing himself to Mankind, or that *finite* Beings are not capable of *infinite* Power.

The Good which the Christian Revelation is the Cause of, and the beneficent Nature of the Miracles performed in Support of it, are a farther Proof of their proceeding from God.

The *Second* Circumstance attending the *Fact itself*, as supposed by Mr. Chubb, is the *Good*, or *Evil*, which the Power exercised in a Miracle, considered abstractedly from the Revelation, may be *introductive to*, or *the Cause of*. If it be of a *beneficent* Nature, this makes it *probable*, that it was wrought by God; but, if it be the immediate Cause of *Evil* to Mankind, then it is *probable*, that it proceeds from some other invisible Agent; because it would be *preposterous* in God to prove a Revelation, designed for the *Good* of Mankind, to be *divine*, by working a Miracle which directly tended to their *Hurt*. This, in general, is very right, and, if applied to the Miracles of our Saviour, will make it *highly* probable that they were wrought by the Power of God, since they not only served the most excellent Purposes, namely, the Reformation, and Happiness of Mankind, by confirming a Religion which was intirely calculated for it, but moreover, visibly tended to

to their present temporal *Good*, bringing *Health* to the Sick, *Sustenance* to the Hungry, *Sight* to the Blind, *Hearing* to the Deaf, *Speech* to the Dumb, *Limbs* to the Maimed, *Strength* to the Impotent, even *Reason* and *Understanding* to the Distracted, *Life* to the Dead, and *Release* from the Power of *Satan* to those who were possessed by him. There are but two Instances, among all our Saviour's Miracles, which were so very numerous, that may be excepted against, as having any Appearance of natural Evil, *viz.* his permitting the Devils to enter into an Herd of Swine, and to cast them down headlong into the Sea ^a; and his Cursing the Fig-tree, and causing it to wither away ^b: But even these, when rightly understood, were in the End infinitely more *beneficial*, than *hurtful*, as has been clearly shewn by very able Authors ^c. The same may be said of the miraculous Power which the Apostles had, and sometimes exercised, of inflicting particular Diseases, and even Death, upon notorious Sinners, as in the Case of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, the incestuous Man

^a Matth. viii. Mark v. Luke viii. ^b Matth. xxi. Mark xi. ^c See Bishop *Smallbrooke's* Vindication of the Miracles, &c. Dr. *Pearce's* Part ii. and iii. *Defence of the Script. Hist.* Part ii.

of *Corinth*, &c. For, as Christianity was then destitute of all human Support, and in its Infancy, some such Examples of Severity were necessary to maintain the Authority of the Apostles against the Contumacious, and to prevent the bad Effects of Diffimulation and Hypocrisy, and of public Scandals. And so we read, that *great Fear came upon the Church, and upon as many as heard of the sudden Death of Ananias and Sapphira*^d. So when St. Paul delivered the incestuous Man to Satan, for the Destruction of the Flesh, i. e. to be by him afflicted and tormented in his Body; it was, as he expressly says^e, in order *that the Spirit might be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus*. And, it appears, by what he afterwards tells the *Corinthians*, that this Judgment had its desired Effect: *sufficient*, says he^f, *to such a Man is this Punishment, so that ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up with overmuch Sorrow. — And I forgive him for your Sake, in the Presence of Christ* (or, in his Name, and by his Authority).

^d Acts v. 11
ii. 6, 10.

^e 1 Cor. v. 5, &c.

^f 2 Cor.

Many

Many of the Miracles of *Moses*, and the subsequent Prophets, were indeed of the *vindictive* Kind, and therefore by what Mr. *Chubb* says here, I suppose he would give us to understand, that they were not true Miracles. But, unless he can prove that God cannot in Justice punish obdurate Sinners, or force them to comply with his Will, by present *extraordinary* and *supernatural* Judgments; or, that his Ministers ought not to be the Instruments of his Vengeance in such Cases; his Surmise is equally groundless and unfair. *Pharaoh*, and the *Egyptians*, justly deserved all the miraculous Plagues that were inflicted upon them; and by the Manner in which God acted with them, it is plain that he did not design their Destruction, but their Conviction, and that it was their own invincible Obstinacy and absolute Incurability that brought upon them their final Ruin. For *Moses's* first Miracle, his turning his Rod into a Serpent, which devoured the Rods, or Serpents, of the Magicians, had nothing hurtful in it, it was merely amazing and affrighting: The four following Plagues were rather loathsome than fatal; the *Murrain*, which came after, spent its Rage upon the Cattle only; the *Boils* and

Blains afflicted Men, indeed, as well as Beasts, but did not kill them ; the *Hail* and *Rain*, though the *eighth* of *Moses's* Miracles, was the *first* that extended to the Lives of the *Egyptians*, and even only to those who presumptuously staid in the Field, after they had been graciously forewarned not to do so ; and all these Judgments proving still ineffectual, they were *gradually* encreased, till at last the fatal Blow was given, by the slaying of the First-born, and the drowning of *Pharaoh* himself, and all his Host, in the *Red-Sea*. Was there any Thing unjust, or cruel, in this Proceeding ? Any Thing unworthy of God, and sufficient to disprove the Truth of those Miracles, or even to render them suspicious ? None were punished but those who justly deserved it : The *Israelites* were all this Time spared and safe, and those among the *Egyptians* themselves who hearkened to the Voice of *Moses* preaching up the Power, Sovereignty, and Unity of God, and were well affected towards his People, shared but lightly in those heavy Plagues. For we may well suppose, that it was always the same with them, as in the Case of the Hail and Rain : *He that feared the Word of the Lord, amongst the*

Servants of Pharaoh, made his Servants, and his Cattle, flee into the Houses ^a, which therefore escaped this Judgment. And, as by all these wonderful Plagues, God not only revealed himself to the *Egyptians*, but also wrought the greatest and justest Deliverance in Behalf of the *Israelites*, they proved in the End infinitely more *beneficial* than *hurtful*. The same Observation will hold true with respect to all other Miracles of the *vindictive* Kind, recorded in Scripture; and, therefore, I shall proceed to the Examination of the Circumstances which relate, *Secondly*, To the Revelation itself, and render it probable, that the Miracles performed in its Favour were wrought by God, rather than by any other invisible Being. These Circumstances, according to Mr *Chubb*, must be such as plainly shew God's Wisdom and Goodness, by the Revelation being visibly subservient to Virtue, and consequently to the Happiness of Mankind, both here and hereafter; " For, says " he ^a, as God is the common Parent of his " Creatures, and the natural Guardian of " their Happiness; and, as such, it may fairly be presumed, that he has a much

^a See Exod. ix. 20.

“ greater Regard and Concern for their well-
 “ being, than any other Agent ; so it is
 “ more likely, that he should interpose for
 “ their common Safety, than that one Crea-
 “ ture should thus interpose in Favour of
 “ the rest.” All this is very just, and, if
 applied to the *Christian* Revelation, will
 soon evince the divine Original of the Mi-
 racles done in Confirmation of it, since it is
 manifestly calculated for the Perfection and
 Happiness of Mankind. I shall only observe,
 that instead of saying, as this Author does
 here, that this, and the foregoing Circum-
 stances, *render it* LIKELY, and PROBABLE,
that God is the Agent in producing such Effects
 as Miracles ; he should have said, that *they*
render it CERTAIN. For, if both the *Power*
 exercised in supernatural Works, and the
Revelation in Favour of which it is exer-
 cised, visibly tend to the Good and Happi-
 ness of Mankind, what greater *Certainty*
 can we have, in the Nature of Things, that
 it proceeds from God ? Especially consider-
 ing, that admitting the Existence of other in-
 visible, superior Beings, we know very little,
 by the mere Light of Reason, concerning
 the Nature and Extent of their Power, as
 has been shewn before,

But Mr. Chubb goes farther still in his 10th Section, and says, that this Wisdom and Goodness of God, or this general End of promoting the Good of Mankind, ought to appear visibly through all the Parts of a Revelation, backed with Miracles; so, that if it *should naturally and apparently tend to their Hurt in any Branch of it, this would make it probable, that the Miracles wrought in Favour of such a Revelation, were not wrought by God.* I readily grant the Premises; the divine Wisdom and Goodness must shew themselves through all the Parts of a Revelation, supported by divine Miracles; but the *Consequence* wants some Explanation. For some Things in it may seem to tend, of themselves, to the Hurt of Mankind (which, I suppose, is what Mr. Chubb means by the Words *naturally and apparently*) without destroying the *Probability*, that the Miracles performed in Favour of it are wrought by God; because these Things will, when thoroughly examined, visibly appear to turn upon the Whole to their *greater* Good, namely, their everlasting Happiness in another World. Such are the Precepts of *denying one's self, of suffering even to Death, for Christ's Sake*; which the Gospel enjoins

us; but though they *naturally, and apparently tend to our present Hurt*, yet (besides their own *Reasonableness* and *Justice*) they most certainly turn in the End, according to the Gospel itself, to our much greater *future Happiness* and *Glory*. And therefore Mr. Chubb should have explained himself better, and (if he would make his Argument conclusive, for in no other Light will it be so) have said, that *if a Revelation should visibly tend, not in general, to the Hurt of Mankind, but in particular, to their FINAL Hurt, or ABSOLUTE Misery, in any Branch of it, this would render it probable, that the Miracles wrought in Favour of such a Revelation were not wrought by God*. But, as he knew very well, that no such Thing can be objected to the *Christian Revelation*, he chose to express himself in general loose Words, that intimate what he dared not assert positively.

Indeed, in the next *Paragraph*, which is by Way of *Reply* to this, he takes Notice of the Observation I have just now made, and says, that *it may be urged that those Branches of a Revelation which naturally and apparently tend to the Hurt of Mankind, may, in their secret and remote Consequences, turn to their*
greater

greater Good. But he represents it very unfairly, by supposing, as he does, that this *greater Good* is not only *remote* (which is nothing to the Purpose, if it be *real* and *much greater* than the *natural and apparent Evils* subservient to it) but *secret*, *i. e.* as it appears by the Sequel, such as we know nothing of, or *we are not qualified to discern and reason from* ^a; which is contrary to Truth. For we *know* by Reason, and even by Experience, that the natural Evils, or Afflictions, to which Religion exposes us in some particular Circumstances, turn to our *present Advantage*, namely, the Improvement of our Virtues, and the Tranquillity of our Minds: And, if we believe a *Providence* and a *future Life*, we have all the Reason imaginable to be persuaded, that those Evils are really calculated for our *much greater Happiness* in *another World*; and that, as St. Paul says ^b, *Our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.* And therefore it will not follow from thence, as the Author boldly asserts, that *the most barbarous and cruel, and the most burdensome Institutions may be of God*; and that *there*

^a P. 41.

^b 2 Cor. iv. 17.

is SCARCE any Revelation which has hitherto come forth under an heavenly Character, but this Kind of Reasoning may be turned against it. This SCARCE, he thought a prudent *Salvo*, no doubt; but he did not consider at the same Time, that it entirely destroys the Force of his Argument; for if there be but ONE Revelation against which this Kind of Reasoning cannot be turned, that is sufficient; since there can be but ONE true Revelation, or CONTINUED SCHEME of Revelations; which I add, to prevent all cavilling about the Difference between the *Jewish*, and *Christian* Revelations.

What Mr. Chubb says farther upon this Head, viz. that “ a Sceptic, or an Unbeliever, may from hence raise an Argument against the Divinity of those Revelations which have hitherto been considered as divine, by observing how many Evils, and Mischiefs, they have been the Parents of, or are judged to be so, when considered in their unnatural and latest Consequences; so that it will be exceeding difficult to make it appear, that there has been as much Good as Evil produced by them, &c.” This, I say, is most intolerable, and sufficiently discovers his true Sentiments,

Sentiments, in Spite of all his Caution and artful Turn. For if by *those Revelations which have hitherto been considered as divine*, he means (as he must of Course, else his Argument would be to no Purpose) the *Jewish*, and *Christian Revelations*, he knows in his Heart, that though they may have been the *Occasion* of many Evils and Mischiefs, yet they have not been the *natural* and *efficient Cause* of them, which they must be, to be their *Parents*. The most excellent Things may be, and daily are abused: But, because Religion has been often perverted to bad Purposes, does it follow, that therefore it is not divine? No more, than the Abuse of *Reason*, which is so common among Men, is a Proof that *Reason* is not the Gift of God; or than the Perversion of wholesome Laws is an Argument that they were not enacted by public Authority. In vain does he add, to soften his Expression, that at least *they are judged to be so* (the Parents of many Evils and Mischiefs) *considered in their unnatural and latest Consequences*. For who judges them to be so, but those very *Sceptics* and *Unbelievers*, whom he so well and so naturally personates in this Place, whose Judgment, I hope, will never prevail among the wisest

wisest and soberest Part of Mankind? Farther, what does he mean by their *unnatural Consequences*? He has called them before, *secret*, or unknown, though very unjustly; but is every Thing that is unknown, for that Reason unnatural? Or, does he mean, that they are *above* the Course of Nature, or *supernatural*? I grant it; but then he should have expressed himself so. Or, would he insinuate that they are *against Nature*, i. e. not according to the Nature and Reason of Things, and therefore *impossible*? Or, lastly, (for it is not easy to guess at his Meaning) does he speak here of the bad Effects, the barbarous, cruel, and therefore *unnatural* Effects, which *an Abuse* of the Revelation has oftentimes produced in the World? By the Manner in which he concludes this whole Reasoning, one would be apt to think he does; for he says, that *nothing can be fairly concluded in the present Case, because a Revelation cannot in Reason be justly chargeable with any Consequences, but what visibly, naturally, and apparently spring from it.* But then he should have explained himself better, and not have called those bad Effects, the *Consequences of Revelation*, thereby confounding them with those other *proper*,
and

and good, though never so remote, Consequences of it, which he had considered before. This is a *Specimen* of his *perplexed* Style, and Way of arguing (whether *natural* or *affect-*
ed, I will not determine) which I thought proper fully to expose to the Reader's View. I shall only add, that from what has been said concerning the supposed *natural* Power of superior, invisible, intelligent Beings to work Miracles, it plainly appears how intricate and unsatisfactory that *Hypothesis* is, and how much clearer, shorter, and more simple and rational, as well as more conformable to the Scripture-Account of Miracles, is the Notion which I have all along established and vindicated, *viz.* That God alone is the immediate efficient Cause of them.

The *second Circumstance*, which Mr. Chubb, *The Want of Univer-*
with all our modern *Infidels*, thinks necessa-
ry to *heighten* the Probability that Miracles *sality in a Religion*
wrought in Favour of a Revelation proceed *supported by Mira-*
immediately from God is, *That that Revelation*
be equally communicated to All who alike stand in *cles, does not destroy the Proba-*
need of it: And he says, “ that the want of *bility of their being the Works of God.*
“ this *Circumstance* destroys, or at least very
“ much weakens the Probability that those
“ Miracles are wrought by a divine Hand,
“ even supposing that all other Circumstances
“ concurred

“ concurred in Favour of the Divinity of
 “ that Revelation ^a.” How far this is true
 will soon appear, by examining a little more
 impartially than he has done, the various Rea-
 sonings which he thinks may be offered on
 either Side of the Question.

And *first*, he observes, that if God’s not
 giving a Revelation to *all*, but only to a *part*
 of Mankind, be an Instance of *Partiality*,
 or *Want of Goodness* towards those who have
 not the Advantage of it; then he is alike
partial and *defective* in Point of *Benevolence*,
 in not making *all* his Creatures *capable* of
 attaining to *equal* Degrees of Happiness, and
 in not giving *equal* Faculties to *all* Men, and
 not putting them under the *same* advantage-
 ous Circumstances, or in not creating them
 all *Angels*, and even Angels of the *first*
Rank, in order to arrive at the highest Fe-
 licity which it is possible for a Creature to
 enjoy. But as God cannot *fairly* be charged
 with Partiality and want of Goodness in the
latter Cases, so neither can he in the
former.

To which Argument, drawn from *Ana-*
logy, and very *conclusive* in itself, Mr. Chubb
 says, it may be answered *first*, that *as to An-*

^a P. 43, 44.

gels, we know nothing about them, either as to their Capacities, or to the Degree of their Happiness; and therefore they ought not to be brought into the Question^a. If this be so, what will become of all that he has built before on the contrary Supposition? of all the *wild* Reasonings that he has made Use of for above thirty Pages, concerning the *natural* Powers and Dispositions of invisible spiritual Beings, and the *groundless* Difficulties which he has raised from thence against Miracles in general? Is it not great *Unfairness* in him to admit, or deny, that we know any thing of them, just as it serves his Turn? Besides, allowing that we are in the Dark about their *Capacities* and *their Happiness*, will the foregoing Argument be the less conclusive for it? Not in the least; for what this Author adds, that “ as to the various Species of Beings which take Place upon this Globe, and which are qualified for different Degrees of Happiness, they were not called in to Being for the Sake of *Variety*, but that a *much greater Good* might be carried on thereby; —so, if a *more general Good* would be carried on by a Revelation’s being given *partially* to some, than it would be by its being given *generally* to all, then the Cases

^a P. 46.

“ under

“ under Consideration would be *parallel*;
 “ but this does not appear to be the Case,
 “ and therefore — there is the *Appearance*, at
 “ least, of great Partiality, and a Defect of
 “ Benevolence in the latter Case, whereas
 “ there is none in the former :” All this,
 I say, is entirely groundless. I know but
one Species of Beings, upon this Globe, qua-
 lified for different Degrees of Happiness,
 (for by *Happiness* must be meant something
 more than mere animal Sensation) namely,
Men; and it is altogether *romantic* to sup-
 pose Brutes, &c. capable of it, and much
 more of different Degrees of it, as Mr. *Chubb*
 does here; adding, that “ if God had made
 “ none but Men, and left all the other Spe-
 “ cies’s of Beings in Non-Existence, then all
 “ the Good which is exercised upon, and
 “ which is now shewn to the several Spe-
 “ cies’s of Beings below us, would have been
 “ sunk and lost.” What! to Beasts, and
 inanimate Beings too, for those comprehend
the several Species of Beings below us. Can
 the *Good* which we do to Brutes be properly
 called *so*? And if *all* that *pretended Good* was
sunk and lost, where would be the Harm?
 Or what Prejudice would that do to our true
 spiritual Happiness, which is here brought
 into

into the Question? Could that ever be a Motive sufficient to induce God to create such a Variety of Beings below us?

As to what Mr. Chubb supposes in this Place, that *the various Species of Beings upon this Globe—were not called into Being for the Sake of Variety, but that a much greater Good might be carried on thereby*; it is quite against Reason, which teaches us that *Variety* makes a necessary Ingredient of *Beauty*^a, and must therefore have entered into the original Scheme of this beautiful visible World. Besides, *Variety* of Action, or of Creation, is a *natural* Consequence of Liberty; and this *Variety*, which so visibly displays itself throughout the Works of Nature, is really the *only* Evidence we can have *à posteriori* of God's being *sovereignly free*. For a Being that never acts but in *one* and the *same* Manner, or whose Exertion of Power is in *all* Cases perfectly the *same*, must act by *Necessity*, and be incapable of *Self-determination* and *Choice*. And indeed, the Notion of God's acting always by the *sole* Consideration of *the greatest Good*, which this Author here builds upon, is destructive of his *free Agency*,

^a See Mr. Hutcheson's *Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty*, &c. and Mr. Crousaz *Traité du Beau*, &c.

and introduces a Sort of *Fate* into Religion. Nay, the System of *THE BEST*, so much cried up of late by some Poets, Philosophers, and Divines, is in my humble Opinion, liable to the same Consequences; and the Use which Mr. *Chubb* himself makes of it in this Place, will not help to clear it from such an Imputation. In answer to the foregoing Argument drawn from *Analogy*, he says, *Secondly*, “ That the present Constitution of
 “ Things is the *BEST* which Nature would
 “ admit of, to answer the great Design intended to be carried on thereby, *viz. a*
 “ *publick or general Good*. For if Things
 “ could have been *better* constituted for the
 “ answering that End, then we have just
 “ Ground to presume that they would have
 “ been so.—And as the Difference betwixt
 “ the Capacities and Circumstances of Men
 “ (*in the natural World*) — results from the
 “ *original* Frame and Constitution of Things;
 “ — so this is an Evil which could not be
 “ provided against, without the Introduction
 “ of some *equal or greater* Evil.—But this
 “ does not appear to be the Case (of a *partial* Revelation from God, since a *greater*
 “ and *more general* Good would be carried
 “ on by its being given *generally to all*)
 “ And

“ And therefore those two Cases are not parallel, they admit of no Comparison^a. ”

What he says, viz. that *the present Constitution of Things is the best which Nature would admit of*, has all the Appearance of mere Nonsense ; except by Nature he understands something different from the true philosophical Notion of it. For if Nature be properly nothing else but the *Assemblage* of created Beings in their original Order and Disposition, with their proper Qualities and Powers, and the Laws by which they are governed ; then Mr. Chubb's Assertion comes to this, that *the present Constitution of Things* (which is the same with Nature) *is the best which that Constitution would admit of* : And what to call this but Nonsense, I know not. He adds, that *if Things could have been better constituted for the answering that End*, (viz. a public, or general Good) *we have just Ground to presume that they would have been so*. But how does this appear ? For my own Part, I can see no Ground for such a Presumption, but the groundless Supposition that God is obliged to do ALL the Good he can to ALL his intelligent Creatures, or that there was in his infinite Mind NO OTHER possible System

^a P. 47, 48.

of Things, *equally good* with the present, if not *better*. *Groundless* I call it, and will prove it so.

To deny that God is as much at Liberty in the Distribution of his Gifts, as in the Production of his Works, is to deny his *sovereign Freedom*, and *absolute Independency*, his Power of rewarding reasonable Beings according to their Capacities and Improvements, and to the right Use which they have made of their Faculties and Opportunities. If *none* are doomed to inevitable Misery, if *all* are made capable of Happiness (whether greater or less, is nothing to the Purpose,) and they cannot miss it but by their own Fault, what reason have they to complain? Where is the Injustice, or the Want of Goodness? Surely God may be *infinitely* good in himself, and good to all Mankind; and yet he may dispense his Favours to them very *variously*, nay, in an *infinite* Variety. And no Reason can be assigned why he may not make such a Difference between them, but what will equally affect the Difference which he has thought fit to put between the various Species of his intelligent Creatures. If he could, without any Disparagement to his Goodness, create *different Orders* of reason-
able

able Beings, one more perfect than another ; he could as well give to those of the same Order, (to Men, for Instance) different Capacities for Happiness, and afford them proportionable Advantages, Helps, and Opportunities. That the Communication of his Goodness to them, or their Happiness, was *one* of his Views in creating the World, cannot be denied ; but that it was his *sole* View, as Mr. Chubb's Reasoning in this Place supposes, cannot be asserted without the greatest Presumption imaginable. *For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor* ^b? Can such short-sighted imperfect Creatures as we are, know all the Designs of an infinite Mind upon this Occasion? He may have had *many different* Views in it, though we are not acquainted with them. And indeed, if we consider that it is the Property and the highest Mark of Wisdom, to bring *several* Designs about through *one* and *the same* Method, we can hardly doubt but that God, whose Wisdom is infinitely above all our Conceptions, had *many* grand Purposes in View when he created the World. Even the free Exertion of his Power and Wisdom, and arbitrary

^b Rom. xi. 34.

Will may have been a Motive to it ; for as there was no Necessity in Nature that he should bring into Being such Creatures as now are, or indeed any Creatures at all, because he is in himself infinitely happy and all-sufficient ; it must be acknowledged, that though he had wise Reasons for it, yet this World is the Production or Effect of his sovereign Liberty.

As to the other Supposition, that God was obliged to prefer this present System of Things to any other, because it was the *best* of all ; it is in my humble Opinion equally groundless : For it implies, that *nothing which is not, could possibly have been, and that nothing which is could possibly, either not have been, or have been different from what it now is ; which is evidently most false and absurd*^a. All Things in the World appear plainly the most arbitrary that can be imagined ; the Laws of Gravitation, Attraction, &c. the Motion of the Planets, and especially that of Comets, their Distances from the Sun, the Number of the heavenly Bodies, of the Species of Animals or Plants, of our Senses, &c. all these and many more might not have been

^a Dr. Clarke's Demonstration of the Being, &c. p. 59, 60.

at all, or have been altogether different from what they now are, without any Detriment to the whole, or Disparagement to the Wisdom, Power, and Goodness of God^b. Nay, if we judge of it by our own Ideas, (and what other Rule have we to go by in this case?) *natural Evil*, at least that Part of it which is not a necessary Consequence of *Sin*, or of Man's free Abuse of his Faculties and Advantages, might have been excluded out of the present System, which therefore would be so far better. Let me add, that an *infinite* Mind must have had in itself the Idea of *various* Systems or Plans, every one of which might be upon the whole as *perfect* as this is, and as worthy of his Choice. God alone is absolutely perfect, and it is impossible that what is brought into Being should ever be as perfect as himself, or even so far so, as that a *greater* or *equal* Goodness cannot be supposed in any other Creature, or System of Things merely *possible*.

But if these two Suppositions be so evidently false and absurd, then the Reasoning which is built upon them, *viz.* that *if Things could have been better constituted*—

^b See *Ibid.* p. 62, 63.

we have just Ground to presume that they would have been so, must of Course be alike false and absurd; and the Consequence which Mr. Chubb draws from it, namely, that, "the
" Difference betwixt the Capacities and Cir-
" cumstances of Men (in the natural World)
" could not be provided against without the
" Introduction of some equal or greater E-
" vil,—whereas a greater and more general
" Good would be carried on by a general,
" than by a partial Revelation from God;
" and that therefore those two Cases are not
" parallel, i. e. there is the Appearance at
" least of great Partiality, and a Defect of
" Benevolence in the latter Case, whereas
" there is no such Appearance with respect
" to the former;" this Consequence, I say,
falls of itself to the Ground. But in order
the better to shew the Fallacy of it, and to
clear up fully this whole Matter, I shall, in
as few Words as I can, propose some Con-
siderations, by which it will evidently ap-
pear, that there is no Partiality, or Defect of
Benevolence, in the Christian Revelation not
being in Fact universal.

The Chri-
stian Re-
velation
particular-
ly, not be-

And *first* I observe, that though this Re-
 velation has not actually been communicated
 to all Nations, and spread all over the
 World,

World, yet it cannot be denied, but that it has in *itself*, and in its *Destination*, this Character of *Universality* so much insisted on. All its Doctrines and Precepts lie level to the Capacities of *all* Mankind, and are fit to be received by *all* equally, and equally calculated for their *common* Perfection and Happiness. There is nothing in it that makes it peculiar to certain Nations, Places, or Times, or even more adapted to the Circumstances of some particular People than of others: But the beneficent Author of it visibly designed it for the whole Race of Mankind, and for all Ages. When he commissioned his Apostles to promulge it, he bade them *to go and teach all Nations, to go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*^a. They themselves declare that they were bound so to do, and that the Intent of God was, that this *supernatural* Light should shine all over the Earth, and bring all Men to the Knowledge of the Truth. *It was necessary*, say they to the *Jews*, *that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of*

ing in fact universal, is no Objection against its divine Original, or against the Goodness and Justice of God. This is shown by several Considerations.

^a Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15. See also Luke xxiv. 47. Acts i. 8.

everlasting

everlasting Life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a Light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldst be for Salvation unto the Ends of the World^b. The same may be seen all over St. Paul's Epistles, but more especially in that to the *Romans*, wherein, among other Things, he speaks at large of the Calling of the *Gentiles*, (i. e. of all the Nations of the Earth indiscriminately) to the Light of the Gospel, and through it, to the eternal Salvation purchased by *Christ* for us. And in his first Epistle to *Timothy*, c. ii. 4. he positively asserts, that *God will have all Men to be saved, and in order to it, to come unto the Knowledge of the Truth*, i. e. the Gospel. Upon the whole therefore, no Doubt can remain but that the *Christian Revelation* is of its own Nature, and in its first Appointment, a *general or universal Revelation*. If it be objected, that this is nothing to the Purpose, because *in Fact* that Revelation is not *universal*, since it was not at first, nor is it even now communicated to all Mankind; I observe, in answer to it,

Secondly, That the Want of this actual *Universality* is owing, both to the Nature of

^b Acts xiii. 46, 47.

the Thing itself, and to particular Circumstances, and not to any *Partiality*, or *Defect of Goodness* in God. He might, no doubt, have revealed himself all at once to every Individual, by an inward Illumination, or an immediate Operation on their Minds. But, as I have shewn before ^c, this way of Revelation would have been liable to many more, and much greater Difficulties and Inconveniencies, than that which God has been pleased to make use of. *Enthusiasm* and *Imposture* are much easier to be discovered and prevented, as Things now stand, than they would if God was to reveal himself to every particular Person; because there are Circumstances attending an *external* Revelation, such as *Miracles*, *Prophecies*, &c. whereby one will soon be enabled to judge whether it comes from God, or no; which cannot be the Case of an *internal* Revelation. Add to this, that the *latter* Way would subvert Man's Liberty, or at least put the Exercise of our rational Faculties under greater Restraint, which would very much diminish the Merit of Faith and Virtue; whereas the *former* Way is not only consistent with the *Exercise* of them, *i. e.* with our Nature and Duty,

^c P. 134, 135.

but

but moreover very fit to promote and improve it. And therefore if God intended to make a general Revelation of his Will to Mankind, he must have pitched upon this Method, as being the fittest, *because we may be assured God will always make use of such Ways and Means, as will best answer the End proposed*^a. Mr. Chubb himself, after much disputing and perplexing the Case, owns that *the Point at last turns upon this*^b, and had he begun by it, he would have saved himself and his Readers a great deal of Trouble.

If this be so, then it is plain that the *Christian* Revelation could not be given to Mankind but *partially*, and by *Degrees*. It must have been published at first, as it was, by a *few* chosen Men (who received it by an immediate Communication, or Inspiration from Heaven) supported by *external* Evidence, propagated by Word of Mouth or by Writing, and committed by the first Preachers to others, who should likewise make it their Business to spread it far and wide, and so on, till the Knowledge of it should reach all Places and Nations of the Earth. This could not be done in any other

^a Mr. Chubb's Discourse, p. 69.

^b *Ibid.* p. 68.
Manner;

Manner ; for to publish the Gospel at once all over the World, in every Town and Village, and to every Individual, there should have been almost as many Preachers as Hearers ; and besides, this Revelation being chiefly founded on Facts, either those Facts must have been multiplied *ad infinitum*, have happened every where, *i. e.* our Saviour must have lived, died, rose again, &c. every where at the same Time, which is absurd and impossible ; or else the Gospel must have been preached *first* in the Country wherein these Facts were transacted, and from thence propagated *by Degrees* among all Nations. So that in the Nature of the Thing, Part of the World must have been deprived of it, whilst the rest enjoyed it. And if that be still the Case, if the *Christian* Revelation has not as yet shone over all the Face of the Earth, we ought not to wonder, much less to complain of the Conduct of Providence in this respect. For,

Thirdly, as it was to be propagated in a *natural* Way, it must of Course have undergone the Fate of all *human* Affairs. The Apostles, or their immediate Disciples, spread it almost all over the then known World : And had the Christians of the succeeding

ceeding Ages been inflamed with the same Zeal, it would long ago, in all Probability, have been known every where. Although *America*, which is pretty near as large as *Europe*, *Asia*, and *Africa* together, was not discovered much above 250 Years ago, yet it cannot be doubted, but that as it was peopled from *Asia*, it had some Correspondence with that Part of the World, (to which it is now generally thought it joins towards the *North*) and therefore might have heard of *Christ*. And this seems to be true in Fact from some religious Customs of the *Americans*, which are evidently either *Jewish* or *Christian* *. If no other Footsteps are to be found among them of the Gospel having formerly been known in those Climates, it does not follow that it never was; because, through Corruption and Ignorance, it might have been lost in Process of Time, and so far extinguished, as that not one single Monument, or Record of it should remain. I much question whether one may meet at this Time in *Barbary* with any more Traces of *Christianity*, tho' we know for certain that it was planted, and even flourished there formerly : And I venture to say, that if the *monkish* Ignorance;

* See *Huet. Demonstr. Ev. Prop. iv. cap. vii. §. 3.*

Superstition, and Wickedness, which prevailed for some Ages in *Europe*, had continued to this Day, the very Name of the *Gospel*, together with all the Monuments of it, would, *humanly speaking*, be utterly lost. But be that as it will, and admitting that Christianity never reached *America* before its Discovery by the *Europeans*; yet, it cannot be denied, that that divine Light soon overspread the other Parts of the World; and that if it were not, and is not now still more diffused, or, if it has disappeared in many Places wherein it once shone brightly, it is entirely the Fault of Men themselves. Christians have had it all along in their Power, but especially since the Time of *Constantine the Great*, and the late Discoveries and Improvements in Navigation and the Art of Printing, to propagate it every where. Had they been as zealous to promote the Religion of *Christ* among Heathens and Infidels, as to extend their Trade, and increase their Wealth among them; or had they only been careful to make it known, and render it honourable by the Conformity of their Lives and Manners to its Precepts, in those remote Places, where they have either settled, or gone to for *Lucre's* sake; there is no doubt,

doubt, but that it would by this Time have been the *common* Religion of Mankind. And if by their criminal Negligence and Remissness in this Respect, let me add (as it is indeed but too much the Truth) by their continual Divisions, Contentions, and Persecutions, they have been the Cause that it is not actually so, does not the Fault of it lie at their own Door? Is God obliged, or is it at all consistent with his infinite Wisdom, to prevent or rectify such an Abuse of his most precious Gift and *Depositum* by continual repeated Miracles, by over-ruling Men's Liberty, and forcing them to propagate his Revelation against their Will? It is enough that he once put it into the Hands of some, nay of a considerable Part of them, with express Orders to improve it to their own and the rest of their Fellow-Creatures Advantage, to spread it far and wide, as much as in them lay; and, besides, that he requires no more of any of them, than according to the Light and Opportunities which they actually enjoy. But,

Fourthly, it is not only the Luke-warmness, Negligence, blind Zeal, and Immorality of Christians, that have hindered, or retarded the general spreading of the

Gospel all over the Face of the Earth; it may, and must be also ascribed to the Want of a proper Disposition to receive it, in those who are destitute of it. Reason tells us, that where Men have abused, or stifled the Light of Nature, and degenerated into mere Brutes, they are both unqualified to embrace the superior Light of Revelation, and unworthy of it. How should those that never exercise their *rational* Faculties about spiritual Things, and have no manner of Relish for *rational* Enquiries, but are utterly destitute of the Love of Truth, and sunk in Matter and Filth, be able to examine into the Grounds of the *Christian* Revelation, so as to come to a *rational* and thorough Persuasion of its most sublime Doctrine, and to submit readily to its most holy Laws? Here I may very well apply what St. Paul says ^a, that the *natural*, or rather *animal Man* ^b, i. e. he who by the Frame and Temper of his Soul, by his Inclinations and Actions, resembles the Brutes, *receiveth not*, or cannot believe and embrace, *the Things of the Spirit of God*, or Things revealed by God; *for they are Foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, or cannot be

^a 1 Cor. ii. 14.

^b ψυχικός.

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judged

judged of, whether they be of a divine Original or no, but by the Use and Exercise of his *spiritual* Faculties. And do such Men, who have wilfully plunged themselves into this *moral* Inability, deserve to be favoured with an extraordinary divine Revelation? Is it consistent with God's Wisdom and Justice, in this Manner to prostitute his most precious Gifts, to make use of such Means as he knows will not, and indeed cannot, have their intended Effect, and to *cast Pearls before Swine*? Is it not even Goodness in him to withhold the Benefit of the Gospel-Light, where he knows it would only increase Men's Guilt and Condemnation, by being obstinately rejected and despised?

That this is in Fact the Case of all those Nations who may be supposed to have hitherto been utterly destitute of that divine Light, can hardly be doubted, if we look into their most unhappy, degenerated State. For Brevity's Sake, I shall refer the Reader to the Authors in the *Margin*^a, who have given a particular Account of it: By which

^a Millar's *Propagation of Christianity*, c. 7. and Locke's *Essay*, &c. l. 1. c. 3. §. 9. as quoted by the Bishop of London, in his *Second* most excellent *Pastoral Letter*, p. 32, &c. To which may be added, Labbat's *Mœurs des Sauvages de l'Amerique*.

it appears, that the Notions and Practices of those People, in Point of Religion, and even of common Morality, have been and still are such as shew the most monstrous Abuse of the Light of Nature and the greatest Brutishness, which render them both incapable of receiving, and unworthy of enjoying the Christian Revelation. I do not here speak of those Nations and Countries, which were once honoured with it, but have lost it by their own Fault; for as God had done whatever was requisite to propagate it among them, they can never be any Exception against the *Universality* of it. And, if we take a nearer View of their Case, we shall find that, though *Mahometanism* was established in those Countries upon the Ruins of Christianity, and has prevailed there ever since, yet so much of Christianity has been preserved in this new Religion, as is sufficient to revive it, or at least to give Occasion to its being looked into, whenever the *Mahometans* are disposed, or qualified for it; which, indeed, they are not at present, nor can be, as long as they are given to that gross Sensuality and Effeminacy which their Religion countenances and is their peculiar distinctive Character; nor as long as the Study of true Philosophy, the

Spirit of Liberty, and a free Enquiry after Truth are banished from among them. For every body knows, that judging of their *Koran* for themselves is forbidden them, as well as all disputing about Religion, either in Conversation or in Writing ; and that a blind, absolute Submission to their Doctors, or spiritual Leaders, is in all Cases required of them. Whoever attempts to bring them over to Christianity is exposed to be persecuted, even to Death ; and he that forsakes *Mahomet* to follow *Christ*, which is seldom to be seen among them, must either at the same Time forsake his Country, or expect all Manner of ill Usage in it ^a. And as they are deprived of the Means of Instruction, especially of the Use of Printing, which is one of the greatest, and debarred of the Liberty of judging for themselves and of searching after Truth, and brought up in a spiritual Slavery and Indolence ; they live quite unconcerned about Religion. And can People, thus circumstanced and disposed, be qualified to receive the *Christian* Institution, or be in any wise worthy of it ? They are no more fit Objects of it, than the *Hot-tentots*, or the most savage Nation under Heaven.

^a See *Sale's Koran*, p. 50, 87.

But,

But, besides the Nature of the Thing, which shews that if the Gospel is not more universally known, it is owing *partly* to the bad Dispositions of Mankind; we have in that Revelation itself, and in the Manner in which it was at first propagated, many Intimations plainly confirming what I have said. When our Saviour sent his Disciples to preach this new Doctrine, he bade them, *Into whatsoever City or Town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy^a*, or well disposed to receive both you and my Gospel. *The Harvest truly is great*, or the Number of those who have a sincere Love for Truth and Virtue, and are therefore qualified to embrace my Doctrine is very large, as the Event soon fully justified, *but the Labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he would send forth Labourers into his Harvest^b*. St. Philip was miraculously directed to meet the *Eunuch*, or rather Great Chamberlain of *Candace* Queen of *Ethiopia*, upon the Road, and bring him to the Faith of *Christ*, as being well prepared for it: For we find him not only come from so distant a Country to *Jerusalem*, in order to worship there, and to discharge the Duty of a true *Profelyte of the Gate*, but moreover actually

^a Matth. x. 11.

^b Ibid. ix. 37, 38. Luke x. 2.

employed in his Chariot in reading the Scriptures, and very desirous to attain to a right understanding of them ^c. *Cornelius the Centurion* is represented as *a just Man, and one that feared God, whose Prayers and Alms were accepted of the Lord*; and therefore *St. Peter* was divinely commissioned to preach the Gospel to him, and instruct him in the Christian Faith ^d. It is said, that upon the preaching of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, at *Antioch*, as many as were ordained to eternal Life, or disposed for the Truths relating to eternal Life, believed ^e: And, because the *Jews* at *Berea* were more noble than those in *Thessalonica*, i. e. had more noble, or elevated Sentiments which disposed them to embrace the Truth, notwithstanding the present Disadvantages, or Persecutions that might attend it; they received the Word with all Readiness of Mind ^f. And at *Corinth* *St. Paul* had a Vision, in which he was ordered to preach the Gospel in that City boldly, because the Lord had much People in it, i. e. there were great Numbers of People well disposed, or qualified to receive his Gospel; and accord-

^c Act viii. 26, &c. ^d Ibid. x. ^e Ibid. xiii. 48. τεταγμένοι εἰς ζὼν αἰώνων. See *Hammond* upon the Place. ^f Ibid. xvii. 11.

ingly the Apostle continued there a Year and six Months, teaching the Word of God ^a.

There is no doubt therefore, that if the Christian Revelation is not farther propagated, the Cause of it must be chiefly looked for in the natural and utter *Indisposition* of those that are excluded from it, which being perfectly known to God, both his Wisdom and Goodness are interested in withholding it from them, till this Obstacle be removed, as I observed before; and till, by making a good Use of the Light of Nature, and bettering themselves by it, they become fit Objects of this *supernatural* Revelation.

Should it be objected, as Mr. Chubb has partly done ^b, that if God was a perfect Stranger to Mankind, then it might easily be admitted that he gave them such a Revelation as he intended for their common Use and general Good, though by their own Fault it has not proved so; but, as he very well knew beforehand, both the *Remissness* of some in propagating it, and the *Indisposition* of others to receive it, this renders it very *improbable* that he would give it in the before-mentioned Way, seeing it could not have its designed Effect, or at least it must

That tho' God fore-saw the Obstacles that would naturally hinder the Propagation of Christianity, yet this was no Reason why he should, either not give that Revelation at all, or give it in a different Manner.

^a Acts xviii. 9, &c.

^b P. 62, 63.

be a Course of many Ages before it can have it, and consequently, the greatest Part of Mankind may lose the Benefit of it: Should this, I say, be objected, I answer, first, That this Reasoning proves nothing, because it proves too much; for by the same Rule, the Light of Nature might be denied to be the Gift of God, seeing that the much greater Part of Mankind shamefully abuse and pervert it. Mr. Chubb himself allows, that when a Revelation is given by God to Men, it will be done in a Way which is consistent with human Liberty; and then it will be the Subject of every Man's free Choice, whether he will receive (I add or propagate) the Benefits intended by it, or not^a. And therefore, though God foresaw that the Success of the Gospel, through the Fault of Men, would be much obstructed, yet this was an Evil which could not be prevented without the Introduction of a greater Evil, viz. the Subversion of human Liberty. Secondly, I ask whether this Evil (of the Christian Revelation not being universally known and received) be in the least comparable to the infinite Good which that Revelation has actually done in the World? Infidels may magnify this Evil as much as they please,

^a P. 63.

but

but it is an undeniable Matter of Fact, that the Gospel has, even from the Beginning, spread its most beneficent Influences over the much greater Part of the Earth, as may be collected from many antient Authors, both sacred and profane, to which I shall refer the inquisitive Reader ^a. It has either totally abolished, or greatly reformed the Pagan Idolatry, not only in all the Roman Empire, but almost every where else. *Mahometanism*, which was established upon its Ruins and spread far and wide, has nevertheless borrowed from it the best Notions and Precepts it contains. In short, as it cannot be denied, that there is infinitely less Idolatry and Corruption in the World now, than before our Saviour's coming, and much more of true Piety and sound Learning; so it must be acknowledged that this general Change for the better is entirely owing to the Christian Revelation ^b. But does it follow, that because it could not be more

^a See Grotius *De Veritate Relig. Christ.* Lib. ii. §. 20: or Rom. i. 8. x. 17, 18. xvi. 25. 26. Coloss. i. 23. Just. Apol. ii. and Dial. adv. Tryph. Iren. Lib. i. Cap. 3. adv. Hæres. Tertul. Lib. i. adv. Judæos, Apol. ii. Origen, Lib. i. contra Cels. Homil. iv. in Ezech. Arnob. Lib. ii.

^b See the Bishop of London's *11d Pastoral Letter*, p. 36, 37, 38; and Dr. Clarke's *Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 169.

general,

general, or effected all at once in the Way that God chose for that Purpose, and which I have before shewn to be, upon the whole, the wisest and fittest ; does it follow, I say, that therefore it would have been better not to have given that Revelation at all ? Is God then obliged to do no Good, unless he communicates it at the same Time to all Mankind ? This is so very absurd, that no reasonable Man can suppose it. Let me add, *thirdly*, that as the Light of the Gospel could not, in the Nature of the Thing, overspread the Earth, but by a *gradual* Propagation, keeping Pace with the natural Improvements of Mankind, and with the Progress of Arts and Sciences, of Knowledge and Virtue^a, which consequently must require a considerable Time to bring about ; and as the World may, for ought we know to the contrary^b, last many Thousands of Years more than

^a See the Proof of this in Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion*, &c. and Mr. Edm. Law's *Considerations on the State of the World*, &c.

^b There is nothing in Nature, from whence we may form any probable or plausible Conjecture that this World draws to an End, no considerable visible Decay, no near Tendency to a total Dissolution in our *Solar System*. On the contrary, the more we look into it, the more we have Reason to think, that it may subsist a much longer Time than it has already done, especially under the Direction of an all-wise and

than it has already lasted; the Time that has elapsed since the first Promulgation of that heavenly Doctrine may be looked upon but as a short Beginning, or very inconsiderable Part of a long Period, in which the *Christian* Revelation is to triumph every where, and to be the common Religion of Mankind. And both these God foreknew, as well as the Obstacles which should at first hinder its Propagation over all the World, and which therefore could never be a sufficient Reason to engage him not to give that Revelation at all,

and all-powerful Being. The Gospel tells us, that it shall be destroyed one Day, but at the same Time declares, that *of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no not the Angels of Heaven*, (Matt. xxiv. 36.) And Experience has long ago proved, how mistaken those first *Christians* were in this Point, who, because our Saviour had blended the Destruction of the World with that of *Jerusalem*, imagined that they would both happen at the same Time. Nay, St. *Peter's* reasoning against the *Scoffers* of his Time, that God does not defer the Execution of his Promise concerning the Judgment to come, and the Dissolution of this visible Frame of Things, or that those Events are no less certain for being still at a Distance; *because a thousand Years are with the Lord as one Day* (2 Pet. iii. 8) i. e. his Designs are not affected any more than his Nature by any Length of Time, and in bringing them about, he may make Use of the longest Period according to our shallow Conception, without any Disparagement to his Wisdom or Veracity: This Reasoning, I say, plainly supposes, that it is at least *possible* that the World may last many thousand Years longer, which is sufficient for my Purpose.

But

The Objection taken from the final State of those who never heard of Christ, which is by Mr. Chubb, and other Deists, supposed to be lastingly miserable,

But it is farther urged^c, that as *Mankind, without a divine Revelation, are supposed to be in great Danger of falling into a State of great and lasting Misery* (if not absolutely doomed to it); all those that have never heard, or shall never hear of *Christ*, must be looked upon as irrecoverably lost, which is utterly inconsistent with God's Goodness and Mercy: For if God, out of a tender Regard for the well-being of his Creatures, kindly interposed for the Relief of some, the same Regard would equally dispose him to interpose for the Relief of all in those Circumstances. Nay, to ascribe to him a different Conduct, is to suppose him good only to a few, and cruel and unmerciful to all the rest. This is the common Cant of *Deists*, their grand Objection, by which they flatter themselves they can impose upon unwary Readers, and puzzle Divines. But it is easy to shew that there is no Manner of Solidity in it.

Fully answered.

Indeed, should the Advocates for *Christianity* assert, that that Revelation was so absolutely necessary to Mankind, that without it they never could in any Degree know, or practise their Duty, nor consequently

^c Mr. Chubb's Discourse on Miracles, &c. p. 49. 50. See also Christianity as old as the Creation, &c. p. 354, &c.

find any Acceptance with God, but must unavoidably be miserable for ever; or should we suppose that God requires as much of those that never heard of *Christ*, as of *Christians* themselves; and that the happy Influences of his *Mediation* do not in the least extend to them, but are confined to true Believers; in that Case there would be some Ground for the before-mentioned Objection. But this is what no *rational* Divine has ever maintained, or granted. Reason teaches us, that the Light of Nature, which is common to all Men, was *originally* sufficient to discover to them the great Principles of Religion, and enable them to observe its moral Precepts; and though this Light has been shamefully darkened, abused, and corrupted, it would *still* have the same Efficacy, if it were duly attended to, and followed. So that none of those who do not enjoy the Advantage of the Gospel-Revelation, can be said to be destitute of the Means of knowing and practising their Duty. Reason tells us also, that God, who is infinitely just and good, will require of Mankind nothing but according to the several Talents which he has given them, and will make proper Allowances for their particular Circumstances, Dis-

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advantages,

advantages, and Want of Opportunities ; and that therefore he will accept of their sincere Endeavours, though ever so imperfect, and reward them in a proportionable Degree^a.

The Gospel-Revelation itself confirms all this, and much more ; it expressly declares, that the *Gentiles which have not the Law*, i.e. the revealed Law of God, *do by Nature*, or naturally, without any supernatural Assistance, *the Things contained in the Law*, or the moral Precepts of the Law ; *these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves ; which shew the Work of the Law*, or the good Works or Actions which the Law requires, *written in their Hearts ; their Conscience also bearing Witness, and their Thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another* : And that therefore, *as many as have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law, and as many as have sinned in the Law shall be judged by the Law*^b. God will render to every Man according to his Deeds ; for *there is no Respect of Persons with him*^c. The same plainly appears by the Parable of the *Talents*, *Matt. xxv.* and by what our Savi-

^a See Dr. Clarke's Evidence of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 99, &c.

^b Rom. ii. 12, 14, 15.

^c Ibid. y 6, 11.

our himself says, *Luke xii. 48.* that *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, and to whom much is committed, of him will be asked the more*; which clearly implies, that *less* will be required of those that have received *less*. *Cornelius*, though a *Gentile*, is represented before his Conversion to *Christianity*, as a Man whose *Prayers and Alms came up for a Memorial* (or rather, as an agreeable Perfume) *before God*; and *St. Peter*, upon his being miraculously sent to instruct him, openly declares, that *of a Truth he now perceives that God is no Respector of Persons, but in every Nation, he that feareth him, and worketh Righteousness, is accepted with him*^d; and no Reason can be given why the Benefit of our Saviour's *universal Redemption* should not be so far extended, as to procure that gracious *Acceptance* for all those who have not heard of *Christ*, but yet have improved the natural Means and Opportunities which they enjoyed to the best of their Power, as we see it fared in the Case of *Cornelius*. Sure I am, that the Gospel itself fully justifies this *Hypothesis*, by constantly representing the *Death of Christ* as an expiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of *all Man-*

^d Acts x. 4, 34, 35.

kind,

kind, from the Beginning of the World to the End, without any Exception whatsoever; and his *Mediation*, as extending to them *all*. I shall quote but two or three Passages out of the great Number that might be produced to this Purpose. *John the Baptist* describes him under this Expression, *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World*, i. e. of the WHOLE WORLD^a: For so St. *John* the Evangelist expressly declares, *He is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the WHOLE WORLD*^b. *There is one God*, says St. *Paul*^c, *and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for ALL MEN, to be testified, or manifested, in due Time*^d. No doubt can remain therefore, but that by Virtue of *Christ's* Mediation and Sufferings, the sincere Repentance of those who never had the Gospel offered to them, will be accepted of

^a John i. 29. ^b 1 John ii. 2. ^c 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

^d See Archbishop *Tillotson's* first Sermon on the Prejudices against *Christianity*, and his third Sermon on the Necessity of good Works, wherein this Doctrine is insisted upon, and fully made out. See also Dr. *Bradford's* last Sermon at *Boyle's Lecture*, on the imperfect Promulgation of the Gospel; and the Bishop of *London's* Second *Pastoral Letter*, p. 46.

God,

God, and rewarded with a proportionable Degree of Felicity in another World. And if it be so, where, I beseech you, is the Partiality, or Injustice, so much complained of? Or what more can be desired for a full Confutation of the before-mentioned Objection?

I expect it will be said, that upon this Foot, Revelation is of no great Use, since Men might have obtained Happiness without it; and if the End of it was to give Occasion to God to communicate to them different Degrees of Felicity, that End would as effectually have been served by God's giving no Revelation at all, because in that Case there would be still different Abilities, Opportunities, Improvements, and Attainments among Mankind^e. To which I answer, *First*, that considering the degenerate State into which they were fallen by their wilful Abuse of their own Reason and Liberty, the Power of their Prejudices and Passions, of their Ignorance and Vices, which rendered the Light of Nature, and all the good Precepts and Examples of their best Philosophers, utterly insufficient to reform them^f;

That tho' Men might have attained to some Degree of Happiness in another Life, without a Revelation, yet Revelation was highly useful and expedient.

^e See Mr. Chubb's Discourse, &c. p. 50. ^f See this Subject at large, in the second *Pastoral Letter* of the Bishop of London.

a divine Revelation was not only highly *useful*, but even thus far *necessary* for that Purpose. Without it *few*, very *few*, would be able to know their Duty, and *fewer* still would practise it as they ought; as is evident from the Experience of more than two thousand Years; and therefore *few*, very *few*, would attain to any Degree of Happiness in another Life. But now, infinite Numbers who would be totally deprived of it, are by the *Christian* Revelation put in a new Capacity of obtaining it. *Secondly*, The Knowledge of those Doctrines which are peculiar to that Revelation, and could in no wise be discovered by the Light of Nature, such as the whole Scheme of our Redemption through *Jesus Christ*, the Nature of future Rewards and Punishments, the Resurrection of the Body, the Circumstances of a Judgment to come, &c. is of infinite Advantage to Mankind. Does not this Knowledge highly contribute of itself, to improve, satisfy, and set their Minds at rest; to better their Lives and Manners, and fill them with Joy and Hope *in well doing*? Was the Religion of Nature ever able to produce any thing like those most excellent and glorious Effects of Faith, which were daily seen among the primitive *Christians*? That Greatness of Soul, that universal

versal Benevolence, Generosity, and Disinterestedness, that unparalleled Trust in God, that Courage and Constancy amidst the bitterest Persecutions and Torments, that Self-denial, and unblameable Conversation; which attracted the Eyes and Admiration of the World, and even the Praises of their greatest Enemies? And is not this a very sensible Proof of the vast Superiority of the *Christian* Revelation over the Light of Nature, and consequently of its inexpressible *Usefulness* and *Expediency*? Let me observe, *Thirdly* and *Lastly*, that though those who are deprived of the actual Knowledge of that Revelation, may, if they improve the natural Advantages which they enjoy to the best of their Power, attain to a proportionable Degree of Happiness in another World; yet it is not in some Sense *without it*, or independently of the Doctrine of *Christ's* Death and Mediation, which is the grand Object of it. For I have supposed all along, that the Benefit of this Death and Mediation extends to all Mankind without Exception, so that none can be saved but through them, agreeably to what St. Peter says^a, that *there is no Salvation in any other (but Christ); for there is none other Name under Heaven, given among*

^a Acts iv. 12,

Men, whereby we must be saved. And therefore, from this Concession that virtuous Pagans may be saved, it does not, it cannot follow, that the Revelation is *useless*. On the contrary, the great Excellency of it appears in that it discovers to us *the Way* in which this is effected, and of which we could never have any Notion at all by the mere Light of Nature.

The chief and direct End of Revelation is not to communicate different Degrees of Happiness to Mankind, but to reform and improve them.

As to the other Part of the before-mentioned Objection, *viz.* “ that if the End of Revelation be to communicate *different Degrees of Happiness* to Mankind, that End would have been as effectually obtained without it, as with it, since there would be still *different Abilities, Opportunities, and Improvements* among them; “ which would give Occasion to *different Rewards* in another Life;” I observe, *first*, that this is not, nor can it be the End of Revelation. The grand Design of it was manifestly to reform and improve those to whom it should be given. If by that Means they are brought to a higher Degree of Happiness than they would otherwise attain, this is but a *Consequence* of their Reformation and Improvement, founded in the Nature of Things, and the Perfections of God. A

greater Knowledge, and sublimer Virtue must *of Course* be attended with a greater Pleasure and Satisfaction, and be rewarded by a most merciful and righteous Judge with a proportionable Degree of Felicity. And indeed the Difference arising from it is not so much owing to the Revelation itself, as to the natural Capacities and Circumstances of those that enjoy it, and make the best Use of it they can. For even among *Christians* who are *equally* enlightened with it, their Improvement is not *equal*, nor consequently their Happiness; but there is in that respect an *infinite* Variety. *Some* are of so narrow an Understanding, or so destitute of the Means of a good Education, that they can hardly acquire a true Notion of the first Principles of Christianity; *Others*, with a better Share of both, have but a tolerable Knowledge of it; and *few*, very *few*, can frame to themselves a just Idea of that most perfect Scheme of Religion, and prove its divine Original by the Strength of their own Reason and Argumentation. Some by their Stations in the World have both the Means and Opportunities of doing *much* Good, while others by their low Circumstances can do but *little*. Is a Peasant able to understand the Revela-

tion as well as an eminent Divine? Or can a poor Man be of as much Service to the Cause of Truth and Virtue, as a Man of Fortune and Credit? And does not this great Variety, which must occasion a proportionable Variety of Rewards in another Life, proceed from the various Capacities which God has thought fit to give to Men in their Creation?

But, *secondly*, it is not merely *different Degrees*, but *much higher Degrees* of Happiness, which Revelation occasions or procures, than could be obtained by the Religion of Nature; for which Reason, that End would not have been as effectually served without it, as with it; and therefore Revelation is so far from being useless, that the Advantages of it are inestimable. Suppose, for Argument's Sake, that there are *a thousand* different Degrees of Happiness in another Life (for who can limit their Number?) and that while the Religion of Nature cannot raise those that have no other Guide, above the *tenth* or *twentieth* Degree, Christianity, when duly understood and practised, renders Men capable of attaining at once to the *nine hundredth*, or even to the *thousandth* Degree; is not this Revelation *infinitely* preferable, and of the *highest*

highest Importance and Usefulness? And that this is the Case, no body can doubt, who reflects on its intrinsic Excellence, and the glorious Effects it has produced in the World, as has been shewn before. If *John the Baptist*, though *greater* than any of the Prophets that went before him, was still in our Saviour's Opinion inferior to *the least in the Kingdom of Heaven*^a; what shall we say even of the best Men among the Heathens? Surely, neither *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, nor any other of their most distinguished Philosophers, are in the least to be compared to a *common Christian*, who is well grounded in the Principles of Christianity, and lives up to its Precepts (for as to ignorant, immoral *Christians*, they do not deserve that Name, and the honest sober *Heathens* will be accepted before them): As he excels them *vastly* in religious Knowledge, and true solid Virtue, so will his future Happiness *vastly* surpass theirs. To suppose that there was no Occasion for Revelation on that Account, is to suppose that a much greater Improvement of our Nature, and consequently a much higher Degree of Happiness than could possibly be obtained without it, are of no Sig-

^a Matt. xi. 11.

nification, or unworthy the infinitely wise and good Governor of the Universe: It is to suppose, that God is not at Liberty to dispense *extraordinary* Favours as he pleases, and when he pleases, though he injures none by it; or that he cannot act in the *moral*, as in the *natural* World, grant *new* and *superior* Capacities for Happiness to Men, in order to raise them at once to a superior Felicity. But this is the most absurd Supposition imaginable, and therefore not to be admitted.

To conclude this whole Argument, let me add, that if the Objection of *the Deists*, drawn from the Want of *Universality* in the spreading of the Gospel, be well grounded, God should do *more* than *communicate* his Revelation to ALL Mankind; he should also render them ALL EQUALLY capable of understanding it, and of improving it to the *utmost*. For the Reason why the *Unbeliever* maintains, that if the Gospel be of divine Original, it ought to have been preached to all Nations alike is, that, as it is designed to raise those that are honoured with it to a higher Degree of Happiness than they would otherwise attain, all Men have an equal Right to it, and should enjoy it alike. But the Diversity of the Degrees of Happiness,
which

which result from the Diversity of the natural Capacities of Mankind, taking Place with respect to those that enjoy the Benefit of the Revelation, as well as with respect to those that are deprived of it; it is plain, that in order to bring them *all* to the *same* Degree of Happiness, and put them *all upon a Level*, God must not only give them *all* the *same* Revelation, and give it them in the *same* Manner, but also impart to them all exactly the *same* natural Talents, the *same* Capacities, place them *all* in the *same* advantageous Circumstances for knowing and practising their Duty, and in short, make them *all* great Philosophers, profound Divines, and Saints of the first Rank; which is inconsistent with the Dispensations of Providence, and the imperfect State of Mankind here below.

Though I have already sufficiently confuted Mr. Chubb's Reasoning about invisible spiritual Beings, and their pretended Power of working Miracles, I cannot help taking Notice of a long intricate Argument, which that wild Hypothesis gives him an Opportunity to introduce in this Place against the Divinity of the *Christian* Revelation; because there are some Things in it that really deserve

The Want of Universality, in the spreading of the Christian Revelation, does not make it probable that it comes from some superior invisible

ble Agent,
rather
than from
God.

serve Animadversion. The Argument, in short, comes to this; that, considering the *Partiality*, or *Want of Universality* of that Revelation, it is more likely that it is the Production of some inferior invisible Agent, who may be supposed to be *partially* good, than of God, *who always does Good for Goodness Sake*^a. If you ask him, what Motive could induce any other invisible Agent, besides God, to back a Revelation thus constituted for the Good of Mankind, though partially given, with Miracles; he tells you, *first*, that *though such a Procedure could not be accounted for, yet the Question would still remain, Whether such a partial Conduct be divine?* Very well! But then the Argument built upon that Supposition must be very impertinent; for if we cannot conceive any Motive that should induce inferior invisible Beings to act thus, how are we sure that *it is more likely* THEY should do it than GOD? Is not the very Reverse self-evident, at least to us, and till we know more of the Matter than we do now? He adds, that *if we are so little acquainted with the Springs of Action in our own Species, it cannot be expected that we should account for the Conduct of those in-*

^a Discourse on Miracles, p. 51, to 65.

visible

visible Beings, the Extent of whose Power, and the Motives to whose Actions we are perfect Strangers to. But does not this Reasoning hold equally true with respect to God, in the particular Case before us; and is it not a little surprizing, that the Author never thought fit to make use of it here, instead of heaping up the Difficulties which may seem to arise from the Revelation not being universal? A modest Enquirer after Truth, and a Man not at all biassed in Favour of Scepticism and Infidelity, would have at least once argued thus, in answer to such Difficulties: “ If we are so little acquainted with
“ the Springs of Action in our own Species,
“ how can it be expected that we should
“ perfectly account for the Conduct of God
“ (in giving a *partial* Revelation to Man-
“ kind) whose Perfections are infinite, and
“ whose Motives to Action, at least in ma-
“ ny Cases, we are perfect Strangers to?
“ And therefore, though we should not be
“ able to assign any reason for such a Conduct,
(which however is far from being the Case,
as has been shewn before,) “ we should never-
“ theless rest satisfied, that that Revelation,
“ which is in itself so perfect, and so highly
“ advantageous to Mankind, and withal sup-
“ ported

“ ported by the strong Evidence of Miracles, comes from him, and cannot come from any other Being besides.” Surely this humble Turn of Mind would suit such weak, imperfect, short-sighted Creatures as we are, better than cavilling at, and finding Fault with God’s gracious Dispensations in the moral Government of the World, only because we cannot fully account for them; or because the Benefit of them has not as yet reached to all the Nations of the Earth, and we are blessed with it preferably to many other People, *as if our Eye were evil, because the Lord is good.*

But moreover, *if we are perfect Strangers to the Extent of Power, and the Motives to Action of superior invisible Beings*, as is here granted; how do we know that they can perform Miracles, and be the Authors of the *Christian Revelation*? Does it not naturally follow from thence, that we can determine *nothing about it*? And would not our great Reasoner have acted a fairer and more consistent Part, if he had stopp’d short here, or totally omitted this Argument? Did it indeed appear that the *Christian Revelation* is either in itself, or in its outward Circumstances, unworthy of God, or inconsistent with

with his Wisdom, Goodness, or Justice ; in such a Case, we should, without any Hesitation, ascribe it to some inferior invisible Being, or look upon it all as an Imposture : But till then, we have nothing here to do with inferior invisible Beings. If you say, that this very Circumstance of *Non-Universality*, attending that Revelation, shews that it is unworthy of God, and therefore it must come from some other invisible Agent, you plainly beg the Question ; for this is the Point to be proved, and not to be taken for granted. You think, perhaps, to make it out by asserting, that *God does Good for Goodness Sake, and that therefore he will dispense his Favours alike to all, who are alike the Objects of his Goodness*^a. But this is nothing to the Purpose ; for if you mean only, that God does Good without any selfish View, or Prospect of any Return or Advantage to himself, it is granted ; but from thence it will not follow, that God cannot give a *partial* Revelation, or dispense his extraordinary Favours to some particular People, or at some particular Times, preferably to others. But if you understand by it, that he does Good

^a Discourse on Miracles, p. 52.

without

without any Consideration at all, without any other View or Motive but that of doing Good, this I utterly deny ; for his Goodness is always directed by *his Wisdom*, and he never does Good *but for very wise Ends*. And therefore, if he could have any such End in the granting a *partial* Revelation, as I have shewn before he actually had, nothing hinders but that he may be the Author of it. And indeed, if God did constantly do Good without any other Motive whatsoever to determine him, it would follow that he must *always* do *all* the Good he *possibly can* to *all* his intelligent Creatures ; which I have already proved to be absurd, and contrary to Experience^b. And therefore it is not true that *God will dispense his Favours alike to all who are alike the Objects of his Goodness*. It is not their being in *equal* Need of Relief that will determine him, but other Circumstances, such as I have taken Notice of before, and especially their own good or bad Disposition to receive his Favours ; which Circumstances he will weigh in the Balance of his infinite Wisdom, and act accordingly.

^b See p. 275, &c.

But

But admitting, for Argument's Sake, the Power of invifible fpiritual Beings to work Miracles, does it follow, that becaufe the *Chriftian* Revelation is a *partial* one, therefore they are *more likely* to be the Authors of it, than God? Not in the leaft. For as Mr. Chubb himfelf, whofe Buſinefs it is to alledge what can be ſaid *pro* and *con*, very well obſerves in answer to the foregoing Reasoning, "As an *evil* or *vicious* invifible Agent *would not* be the Author of ſo much Good to others, as the recommending ſuch a Revelation might be ſubſervient to; ſo a *good* or *virtuous* invifible Agent *could not* commend ſuch a Revelation as divine, and preſerve his Character, if it were not ſo; and therefore he would not do it.— And if neither a virtuous, nor a vicious invifible Agent, would exerciſe their Power in recommending as *divine* a Revelation circumſtanced as aforeſaid (*i. e.* wholly tending to the Good of Mankind, laying Claim to a heavenly Character, and backed with Miracles, though *partially* delivered) if it were not ſo; then it will follow that *ſuch* a Revelation *muſt* be of God." But this Reasoning, though very concluſive in itſelf, and ſufficient at once to determine

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the Point in Question, does not satisfy Mr. *Chubb*, who displays all the Chicanery he is Master of, to perplex or evade it. And *first*, he observes that no Being is *necessarily* vitious, and that therefore we cannot conclude that an evil Being, let him be ever so evil, will in no Instance do Good, because such Motives may *intervene*, as are sufficient to determine him to it. He adds, that this is the Case amongst our own Species, there being *bad Men*, who in some Instances perform *good Actions*; from whence he concludes, that it is very *possible* for vitious invisible Beings to give to Mankind such a good Revelation as the *Christian* is represented to be: But this is all mere *Sophistry*. For the two Cases are not parallel, and therefore no Conclusion can be drawn from one to the other. *Bad Men* cannot be supposed, in the Nature of Things, to be so confirmed in Wickedness, nor so destitute of Hopes of Mercy from God, as the *Devils*, whose *Existence* is certainly of a much older Date, though we cannot fix the Time of their Creation, and whose *Fall* must be so much the more criminal, as they greatly surpass them in natural Endowments and Dignity: And consequently

sequently, though bad Men may sometimes do Good, it does in no wise follow, that vicious invisible Beings will. Besides, the Motives to Action are not, nor can be the same in both Cases. Bad Men in doing Good may consult their own present Advantage, and in Effect promote it; whereas the Devils cannot have any such Thing in view, in framing and supporting a Revelation that wholly tends to the utter Ruin of their Power and Interest. And therefore it is not *unreasonable* to suppose (though Mr. Chubb would fain persuade us it is) that they never will do any thing for the Good of Mankind, because we not only do not see why they should do it, but we plainly see that it is against their strongest Inclination, and most visible grand Interest not to do it. However I must not pass over a very pleasant Reason which he alledges to shew that this is an *unreasonable* Supposition, *namely*,
 “ because it does not *appear* that our Species
 “ have given *any* Occasion to *any* vitious
 “ invisible Agent, or Society of such Agents,
 “ to take up *such* a Resentment against us,
 “ as *never* to do any thing for the Good
 “ of any of us, though Ability and Opportunity should invite them to it^a. Mr.

An evil invisible Being could not, against his own Inclination and Interest, give to Mankind so excellent a Revelation, as the Christian is manifestly, and back it with Miracles.

^a P. 54.

Chubb may speak for himself; he knows best. It may be, he has not given *any Occasion for such a Resentment* to those vicious invisible Agents: But I will answer, at least for the foundest Part of Mankind, that they *little* care for any Favour from them, and have done *enough* to provoke their *utmost* Resentment. And indeed, admitting for a Moment, that invisible evil Beings *may possibly* do Good in some particular Cases, out of Humour and Fancy (which is the *utmost* that can be supposed, it being impossible, as I said before, to assign any true Reason, or any Reason founded in the Nature of Things, why they should do it); is it not a very wild Way of arguing to infer from thence, that they *may* also recommend to the World the *fittest* Scheme of Religion that can be imagined to promote the *everlasting* Happiness of the *whole* Race of Mankind, and for a long Time exert their *pretended* Miracle-working Power in support of it, without ever since, *i. e.* for about sixteen hundred Years, displaying the same Power in order to overthrow that benevolent Design, and most excellent Institution? To what else can this Way of talking be ascribed, but either to a cavilling,

^a P. 54.

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trifling

trifling Humour, or to a strong Prepossession against Christianity?

But *Secondly*, Mr. Chubb observes, that as to virtuous invisible Agents, they may, notwithstanding what has been said before, recommend a Revelation as divine, which is not so, and back it with Miracles as such; supposing that Revelation highly tended to the Good of some Part of Mankind, and they should be satisfied it would not be accepted, unless it was delivered as coming from God. And the Reason he gives for it is, that *in some extraordinary Cases it may be right and fit to speak and act against Truth^b*. But how does he prove this strange Maxim? Why, by an Instance which is nothing to the Purpose, *viz.* that it is reckoned lawful to deceive sick People for their Good, and give them Medicines to which they have a strong Aversion, under different Names. For why is this lawful? Is it not because People in those Circumstances are supposed not to have the right Use of their Reason, and therefore to be treated as Children, or Madmen? But can this be the Case of a Revelation given as divine, which is not so? Are Men that will not receive it as such, unless they have suf-

And a virtuous invisible Agent would not do it, because it is inconsistent with his Character, to recommend a Revelation as divine, which is not so.

The Absurdity and Immorality of Mr. Chubb's Reasonings upon this Subject.

^b P. 54, 55.

ficient Evidence that it comes from God, to be dealt with, as if they had not the Use of their Reason? Do they not act very *rational-ly* to refuse their Assent to such a Revelation, proposed to them under a false Character, though it be never so much for their Good? And would not the Being, or Beings, that should deceive them in this respect, deal very unjustly by them? In the Instance alledged, the Deception is hurtful to no body, neither to the Patient who by that Means may recover his Health, nor to the Person who sells the Medicines, nor to the Physician who prescribes them, and is fee'd for it: But in the Case before us, *viz.* virtuous invisible Beings recommending a Revelation as divine, which is not so, and backing it with Miracles; the Deception injures the Reason and Understanding of Mankind, it leads them into a *capital* Mistake, and (which is worse still) it affronts God to his Face, by fathering that upon him, which does not belong to him, and making use of his Name, without his Command, or Approbation.

No, says Mr. Chubb^a, “ For as the great
 “ Director of the Universe is not governed
 “ by *capricious Humour*, but by *the Reason*

^a P. 55, 56.

“ of

“ of Things, so in the present Case, there
“ could not be any just Ground of Dis-
“ pleasure to him, because in reality there
“ would no Dishonour *be done*, nor *intended*
“ to be done to him, and his Name would
“ only be used to promote an End, which
“ he could not but approve of, *viz.* the
“ Good of his Creatures.” But does it not
reflect some Dishonour on the supreme Crea-
tor, to ascribe to him the Work of a mere
Creature, which must always be mixed
with some Degree of Imperfection, let that
Creature be never so much exalted as to
Wisdom and Knowledge? Is it not slighting
his sovereign Authority, or at least acting a-
gainst all Decency and good Order, to recom-
mend a Scheme of Religion as his own, which,
though excellent in itself, he never ordained
or confirmed? And would not this look, as
if they thought he was not sufficient of him-
self, or careful as he should be, to provide
for the Good of his Creatures, and the Ad-
vancement of true Religion; or as if true
Religion wanted the Support of Disguise and
Imposture? No Superior can approve of an
Inferior’s making use of his Name, without
his express Order or Permission; and shall
we imagine that God can ever be pleased

with such a Conduct in any of his Creatures, or that any virtuous invisible Being can ever be guilty of it? If he should, he would, I am sure, that Moment cease to be virtuous, for this is absolutely inconsistent with Virtue. *His intending no Dishonour to God* would not excuse him in the least, except Mr. Chubb can shew that a good Intention can justify the worst Things: Which indeed is what he seems to think, when he strains the Point on the Side of Infidelity, so far as to lay it down as a Principle, *that Truth and Falshood, considered abstractedly, properly speaking, are neither good nor evil*^b; and that *Truth becomes good or evil, only by the good or evil Purposes it is made to serve*^c. Whence he has his Notions of *Morality* I know not; but this I know, that if he had better considered the Thing, or read with Care the most celebrated *Moralists* upon it, he would have been ashamed of such a false Assertion as this is. For certainly *Truth* is good, and *Falshood* is evil, in themselves, or of their own Nature, antecedently to, and abstractedly from any other Consideration; and this is the Foundation of

^b P. 57.^c P. 58.

the Obligation we are in to follow the one, and to avoid the other.

But in order to prove the contrary, Mr. *Chubb* observes, that "if a Man should report the Faults and Weaknesses of his Neighbour, not to answer a good, but an evil Purpose, such an Action would be evil and vitious, though he reported nothing but the Truth. And yet if Truth has an intrinsic Goodness in it, when considered abstractedly from the End it is made to serve, then the forementioned Action would not be evil but good." Miserable Sophistry! Though Truth is good of itself, it does not follow that we must *always* speak it. There is a vast Difference between concealing it, and speaking against it, which the Author here visibly confounds. When the Report of it may injure our Neighbour, we ought to forbear; but we are never to act, or to speak, contrary to the Knowledge we have of it. The Exercise of most Virtues is confined to some particular Circumstances and Occasions, out of which they would degenerate into Vices. Beneficence, for Example, is intrinsically and essentially good; but does it follow that we are obliged to practise it constantly, or without

out ceasing, even to our own Hurt and Prejudice? And therefore the Instance alledged, and the Reasoning built upon it, are mere *Fallacy*. But what Mr. Chubb adds, is, (if possible) more so still: *If, says he, telling the Truth to answer a bad Purpose, be evil and vitious, which is an allowed Case, then, by Parity of Reason, saying a Thing that is not true, to answer a good Purpose, may in some extraordinary Cases, be good and virtuous.* Every body must see that there is *no Parity of Reason* in the Case; and if this Reasoning were true, a good Intention would justify the very worst Actions. I might as well argue thus: *If preserving our Neighbour's Goods for a bad Purpose be evil, then stealing them for a good Purpose, may, in some extraordinary Cases, be good and virtuous;* which is most false and absurd. Moreover, he should have marked out, and determined those *extraordinary Cases*, in which it may be lawful to speak or act against the known Truth; or if one is to deduce them from his grand Principle, *viz. the Good this may be subservient to*, then they must be endless: For there are innumerable Cases, in which it may be for our own, or our Neighbours present Advantage, to speak or act contrary to Truth.

But

But if it be right to do it in such Cases, what will become of the mutual Trust and Confidence among Mankind, which is the grand Support of Society? And will not this open a Door to all Manner of Deceit and Falshood? The bare exposing such a pernicious Maxim is enough to make us reject it with Abhorrence. And yet, from this very Maxim applied to the Case before us, Mr. Chubb boldly concludes, “ that we can have *no Assurance* that a virtuous invisible Agent *will not* exercise his Power in recommending a Revelation as *divine*, which in reality is *not so*, when that Revelation is circumstanced as aforesaid,” *i. e. partially* given^a: And upon this Conclusion (which to be sure he thinks unanswerable, since he replies nothing to it) he leaves the Point in Debate, as if he would make the World believe, that the Infidel Side of the Question is by much the strongest, which is his Method all along, and a very *unfair* one I am sure.

After many Arguments *pro* and *con*, which, by what I have remarked upon them, seem to have been designed only to perplex the Subject and puzzle the Readers, Mr. Chubb

^a P. 60.

comes

comes at last to the Point, and says ^b, that
 “ the Force of all that has been offered on
 “ either Side of the present Question, ter-
 “ minates in this, namely, Whether this one
 “ Circumstance *against* the *Divinity* of a
 “ Revelation, (*viz.* its being given *partial-*
 “ *ly*, as aforesaid) or whether all the other
 “ Circumstances which are supposed to con-
 “ cur in *Favour* of the *Divinity* of that Re-
 “ velation ; I say, the Question is, which
 “ of these ought in Reason to determine
 “ our Judgments, either for, or against the
 “ Divinity of that Revelation ?” We see
 now plainly that he takes it for granted, as
 if he had fully made it out, *that this*
single Circumstance proves against the Divini-
ty of the Christian Revelation ; which shews,
 that I was right in my Animadversions up-
 on him. And as I have, I hope, sufficient-
 ly proved the contrary, I might decline
 joining Issue with him upon that Foot, and
 pass by his whole Argument : But I will ad-
 mit it for the present, and apply it to the
 Case of the *Christian Revelation*, which he
 has not thought fit to do, though as a fair
 and impartial *Reporter*, whose Office he has

^b P. 66.

taken upon himself, he should have done it. *The Question then is, Which of these* (the particular Circumstance of *Non-Universality* attending that Revelation, or all the other Circumstances which concur in Favour of its Divinity) *ought in Reason to determine our Judgments, either for, or against that Revelation.* And it will require no great Art or Pains to decide it: For, even supposing that that one Circumstance were as strong *against* Christianity, as all the other Circumstances, *singly* considered, are *in Favour* of it (which is the utmost that can be pretended); it is plain, that these *other Circumstances* must in *Reason determine our Judgments in favour* of the Divinity of that Revelation, because the *greater* Number of Proofs ought to preponderate the *smaller*. *Where* three or four Degrees of Probability concur in behalf of a Thing, against but one Degree of Probability to the contrary, (which is the Case before us) *there* surely it is right to give our Assent without any Hesitation. This is our constant Way of proceeding in *civil* Affairs, and ought to be much more so in *religious* Matters, wherein Mistakes are of infinitely more dangerous Consequence. Especially when, every thing duly weighed, the greater Number of Proofs
appears

appears to be less liable to particular Difficulties and Exceptions, as they plainly do here. For, let the *Non-Universality* of the spreading of the Gospel carry with it never so much an Aspect of *Partiality* and *Want of Benevolence*, unworthy of God; yet, unless it can be shewn, that God could not *possibly* have any Reason for such a Conduct, or propose to himself any wise End in it (which I am sure is more than either Mr. *Chubb*, or any *Deist* in the World, will ever be able to do); the Probability arising from such an *Aspect* or Appearance of Partiality, &c. must be *very weak* in comparison of *that* which results from the *Nature* and *Tendency* of such a Revelation, every way *worthy* of God; from the great *Character* and *Sufferings* of its first Promulgers, utterly inconsistent with Fraud and Imposture; from the wonderful and speedy *Propagation* of it over all the then known World, against the Wit and Policy, the Passions and Interests, the Power and Malice of the most formidable Enemies; from the marvellous *Accomplishment* of several remarkable *Prophecies* contained in it; and from the *many* astonishing *Miracles* of *Christ* and his *Apostles*, which were *plain* Matters of Fact, and much *above* all natural Powers

Powers to perform. These together make up so clear and easy, so strong and convincing an *Argument*, or rather *Chain of Arguments*, in favour of the *Divinity* of the Gospel, as borders upon *Demonstration*; and nothing can *invalidate*, or even render it *dubious*, but a superior, or at least an equal *Evidence* to the contrary. And does the *mere Want of Universality* in the spreading of the *Christian Revelation*, afford such an Evidence, in what Light soever it be considered? I appeal to the *Deist's* own Conscience, and to what has been said before in answer to this Objection, and think it needless to insist any more upon it.

It is now high Time to come to Mr. Chubb's general *Conclusion* from all that he has hitherto offered on the Case of *Miracles*. "In the Course of this Argument, *he thinks*, it plainly appears that "Miracles, under the *most advantageous Circumstances*, *cannot*, in the Nature of the "Thing, afford *certain*, but only *probable* "Proof that a Revelation is divine^a." Nay he is even afraid to be too positive in saying that they AFFORD PROBABLE PROOF;

^a P. 70.

and

and after having summ'd up the whole Argument, *modestly* concludes, that they only SEEM to afford it ^b.

Miracles afford, not only a probable, but a certain Evidence in favour of the Divinity of a Revelation.

By his opposing *probable* to *certain* Proof, it is plain that he either imagines, or would fain make the World believe, that there is *no* Certainty in the *former*, which is absolutely false. Probable Arguments afford what is called *moral Certainty* or *Evidence*, i. e. such an Evidence as will readily satisfy the Mind, and engage the Belief of any reasonable Man, because it is founded in the Nature of Things, is necessary to the Happiness of Mankind in their present State, and agreeable to their constant Practice in all like Cases : And the *higher* the Probability rises, the *greater* is the Certainty ; so that it may be, at last, equal to a strict *Demonstration*. This Mr. Chubb must know, if he knows any Thing of the Matter, or has ever read *Locke's Essay*, &c. or *Ditton's Discourse on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ*, especially the *second Part*, which most accurately explains the Nature of *moral Evidence*, &c. Or, if by *certain Proof* he means *mathematical Demonstration*, it is readily granted (and no body ever asserted the contrary) that *Miracles* do not, neither can

^b P. 71.

they

they *afford* such a *Demonstration*, but afford only a *probable Proof*: But then he should have expressed himself better, and not have opposed the *probable* to the *certain*, as if no kind of *Assurance* could arise from *probable* or *moral Evidence*. And indeed his saying afterwards, that *Miracles* only *SEEM* to *afford probable Proof* that the *Revelation* they are brought to *vouch for* is *divine*, gives me Reason to suspect that he meant it so; though I cannot conceive how he could so grossly impose upon his Readers, seeing he himself states the Case in such a Manner, as to make them draw from it a quite different Conclusion. “ When, says “ *he* ^a, the Circumstances that attend the “ Case afford a just Foundation for presum- “ ing that the Facts in question *exceed* “ the Bounds of human Power, and conse- “ quently there is just Ground to presume “ that they were produced by the Power of “ some *invisible* Being; and likewise, when “ there are other Circumstances which make “ it likely that the Miracles wrought were “ annexed to the *Truth*, and not to a *Lie*; “ and also, when there are such other Cir- “ cumstances attending the Case, as make “ it *more likely* and *probable*, that *God* is the

^a P. 70, 71.

“ Agent

“ Agent in producing those Effects, rather
 “ than *any other* invisible Being; then Mi-
 “ racles in those Circumstances seem to af-
 “ ford *probable* Proof, &c.” There is no
impartial Man that understands any thing of
Logic, but would have left out the Word
seem, and concluded that Miracles, in such
 Circumstances as these, *do plainly* afford *very*
 probable, or *highly* probable Proof, that the
 Revelation they are brought to vouch for is
 divine; especially if it should appear, as I
 hope I have fully made it appear, that those
Circumstances afford a just Foundation, *not*
only for presuming, *but* for being certain,
 that true Miracles exceed the Bounds of hu-
 man Power, are always annexed to the
 Truth, and wrought by God himself, rather
 than by any other invisible Being; for then
 the Argument from Miracles, supposing them
 to be real, must rise to the highest Degree
 of *Probability*, or *moral Certainty*. But of
 this Kind of Evidence more hereafter.

Mr. *Chubb*, having hitherto considered the
 Case of Miracles upon a Supposition of the
 Truth and Certainty of the Facts them-
 selves, goes on to remind his Readers that
 they ought carefully to examine the Grounds
 upon

upon which their Assent to the Truth of those Facts is founded: " For though, says he ^a,
 " there may be Cases in which we may come
 " to a *Certainty* of that Truth, and in many
 " others to a *high Degree* of Probability, yet
 " there may be Cases so *circumstanced*, as may
 " render those Facts very *doubtful* and *uncer-*
 " *tain*; and therefore the *Grounds* of our
 " Assent ought carefully to be *examined*,
 " lest our *Credulity* should mislead us."

I am glad he allows, that *there may be Cases in which we may come to a CERTAIN-
 TY of the Truth of Miracles*, for I shall by
 and by make a proper Use of this Conces-
 sion. Only I wish that he had pointed out
 those Cases (which might have afforded us
 a Rule to go by), and not contented himself
 with expatiating, as he does, upon such as
may render those Facts very doubtful and un-
certain: But to be sure he had his Reasons
 for it, which one may easily guess at. How-
 ever let us *first* examine what he *has* said,
 and *then* supply what he *should have* said.

" Man, *it seems*, is a Creature, not only
 " *capable* of being imposed upon by *others*,
 " but likewise of imposing upon *himself*. He

^a P. 72.

Z

" can

“ can *imagine* that he *sees* and *bears* what
 “ in reality he does not ; and so of his *other*
 “ *Senses*. And though our *Senses* are the
 “ *only* proper Judges of *sensible* Effects, yet
 “ this is not *always* an *absolute* Security against
 “ Delusion ; because sometimes the *Imagina-*
 “ *tion* leads the Understanding, when we
 “ think it is led by the *Senses* ; and then
 “ we conclude that some *sensible* Effects have
 “ taken place, when in *reality* they have not.
 “ And this is the Case, not only when we
 “ are *asleep*, or in the *Height* of a Fever,
 “ or in the *Depth* of Melancholy ; but
 “ *sometimes* when *neither* of these take Place.
 “ When something that is *wonderful* and
 “ *surprising* strikes the Imagination strong-
 “ ly, and when the Mind is not apprized
 “ of its *own Weakness*, and the *Danger* it is
 “ in of being deluded in this Way, and
 “ when *nothing* *interposes* which instantly
 “ shews that it cannot be Fact, but merely
 “ the Product of Imagination ; then the Ima-
 “ gination *sometimes* so far prevails as to mis-
 “ lead the Judgment, and Men become as
 “ *certain* (with regard to the Persuasion of
 “ their *own Minds*) of what is *merely ficti-*
 “ *tious*,

"*tious*, as they are of those Facts which
"are real and certain in themselves^b."

All this may be granted, and what then? Does it follow that we cannot depend upon the Report of our Senses, nor therefore upon the Testimony given to particular Facts? No surely! For, is it a natural and just Inference, that our Senses are *never* to be trusted, or that their Information is not *for the most Part* true and certain, because we may be *sometimes* deceived in our Opinion of what we see and hear, &c? So far from it, that it is undeniable upon true philosophical Principles, that our Senses, when in due order, never do, nor ever can impose upon us; and if in this respect we happen to be mistaken, it is not owing to any Fault of theirs, but to the *Precipitancy* and *Inconsiderateness* of our Judgments, which being misled by the *Imagination*, determine upon mere Appearances, instead of Realities. And therefore we have a ready and infallible Way to prevent any such Mistakes, by suspending our Judgments till we get a full and sufficient Information of our Senses; till we have used all the Precautions imaginable to come at

^b P. 72, 73.

the Truth, such as *consulting* more than one Sense, and as many as the Nature of the Thing can admit ; *viewing* attentively the same Object at different Times, and in different Situations ; and *enquiring* of other People how it appears to them, and what Judgment they make of it. Surely all this is in our Power, and may be observed with respect to miraculous Facts, *when something that is wonderful and surprizing strikes the Imagination strongly*, as well as in the most common Occurrences of Life. Nay, the more wonderful a Fact appears to us, and the more we ought to be upon our Guard lest the first Impression of it should hurry away and mislead our Judgment, the greater is the Necessity of examining narrowly into it before we come to a Determination ; it being by so much of the greater Consequence. All this a wise Man will take Care to observe ; and if after all this we may still be deceived, and if it be impossible for us to come at any Certainty of the Existence of Things without us, or of what passes around us, we must conclude that God has put us under a fatal Necessity of erring, and being imposed upon, which is blasphemous even to think ; we must conclude with the antient and modern

dern *Sceptics*, that this whole Life, all that we see and hear, feel and taste, all that we think and do, is but a continual Delusion or Dream; which no Man in his Senses can ever admit. But if Mr. *Chubb* had no Intention to favour *Scepticism* thus far, I ask what he could propose to himself, by representing all Witnesses of Facts as liable to impose upon themselves, or to be deceived by their own Faculties, and so to mistake *Fictions* for *Realities*? Is it not visibly to insinuate that the *Miracles* related in the Gospel have no Foundation, but in the Imagination or Deception of the Relators? For my Part, I cannot help thinking so, when I consider that what he says in this Place has a Reference, or is intended to be applied to the Case of those *Miracles*, else it would be quite impertinent indeed; and yet he never takes the least Notice of what plainly appears upon the Face of the Gospel History, and has been over and over insisted upon, *namely*, that the Witnesses of them were not, neither could (all Circumstances duly weighed) be deceived in the Report of their Senses, nor in the Determination of their Judgments. And I am still the more inclined to think that this was really his View, when I read what he adds immediately:

“ As Men,” says he, “ are thus *capable* of
 “ being *mised*, so they are the *more strongly*
 “ disposed to it, when *Religion* is any Way
 “ interested in the Case. *Religion awakens*
 “ the Passions, and *engages* them in its Fa-
 “ vour ; and then we are *more easily led* to
 “ believe those Facts to be true, which we
 “ wish to be so, than otherwise we should
 “ do. When *Religion* is to be *propagated*,
 “ and Men consider themselves as *heavenly*
 “ *Messengers*, and as those who are engaged
 “ in the Cause of God ; this too often *intoxi-*
 “ *cates* their Minds, and then they are dis-
 “ posed to, and (without great Watchful-
 “ ness upon themselves) are in danger of
 “ going *groundlessly* into the Belief of those
 “ Facts which tend to *advance* or *strengthen*
 “ the Interest they are engaged in, &c.”

If this be not an indirect and most into-
 lerable Reflection upon the first Preachers of
 the Gospel, I am much mistaken. But what
 does Mr. Chubb mean by saying, that *Reli-*
gion awakens the Passions, &c? *False* Reli-
 gions indeed cannot fail to produce that Ef-
 fect, as they are founded upon, supported
 by, and only fit to promote the Corruption
 of Mankind. But does he think there is no
true Religion? I hope he will allow the *Re-*
ligion

ligion of Nature at least to be so. And does not *true Religion*, the *Christian Religion* as well as *the Religion of Nature*, and even much more, lay a Restraint upon our Passions, and forbid us to indulge ourselves in them? Does it allow any, but what are innocent and commendable? Does it *awaken* any, but the *Love* of Truth and Virtue, the *Love* of God and our Neighbour, *Zeal* for the Glory of our beneficent Maker, and the Advancement of his true Religion, and the *Desire* of our own Happiness? And, far from rendering us more credulous, or more disposed to take upon Trust those Facts, which are alledged in its Favour, as this Author would insinuate, does it not expressly recommend and enjoin a strict and impartial Enquiry into the Grounds of our Faith, and into every Thing that is proposed to us as an Object of it? *to prove all Things, and hold fast that which is good; not to believe every Spirit, but to try the Spirits, whether they be of God, &c.*^a? And this, we are sure, the Apostles and first *Christians* carefully observed; which shews, at the same Time, that they can no more be suspected of *Enthusiasm*, than of *Credulity*.

^a 1 Thef. v. 21. 1 John iv. 1.

In vain therefore are we here told, that *when Religion is to be propagated, and Men consider themselves as heavenly Messengers, and as those who are engaged in the Cause of God, this too often INTOXICATES their Minds, and disposes them to believe any thing*: This Remark is as ill placed, as it is maliciously intended; for what is all this to the Gospel? Those that *propagated* it at first, did not only *consider themselves as heavenly Messengers*, but had *infallible Proofs* of their being really so; and as such, could not be intoxicated with the Thoughts of it. And therefore this did not expose them to the *Danger of going groundlessly into the Belief of those miraculous Facts* which they report. The Character of *heavenly Messengers* is utterly incompatible with that of *Enthusiasts* and *Visionaries*, since the one implies *Reality* and an exact *Conformity to Truth*, the other is all founded in *Imagination* and *Fancy*; besides, it is absurd to suppose that God would ever employ *Madmen* (for *Enthusiasts* are no better, or rather they are the worst and most dangerous Sort of *Madmen*) to manifest his Will, and reform Mankind: And as the Apostles have left us in their Writings a sufficient Evidence of their divine Mission, so have they of the Soundness

Soundness of their Reason and Judgment ; and whoever goes about to represent them in another Light, shews himself utterly void of both.

What Mr. Chubb adds ^a, that *as Men are thus capable of misleading themselves, so sometimes, and under some Circumstances, the Delusion is catching ; it is but to report to others what we see and hear ; and they instantly imagine that they see and hear the same Thing ; is as little to the Purpose.* For if the Apostles cannot without Absurdity be suspected of *Enthusiasm*, if neither their Reason, nor their Senses were *in the least* disordered ; then there could be *no Delusion* in their Judgment of the miraculous Facts which they declare they had seen and heard, and therefore *no catching* of such a *Delusion*. If Multitudes of People came immediately into the Belief of those Facts upon their Report, it was not owing to the Contagion of a *fanatical* Spirit, but to the Force of Truth, *i. e.* to the Evidence they had that those holy Men could not possibly have been imposed upon. For, besides that the Apostles were in the full Possession, and had the free Use, of their Reason and Senses, they had the greatest Interest imaginable,

both present and future, to enquire narrowly into the Truth of those Miracles ; and it was easy for them to make this Enquiry, *since* it was a Question about plain Matters of Fact, of which their Senses were proper Judges ; *since* they had seen them, not a few Times, and at a great Distance, in the Dark, at set Seasons, or in particular Places remote from the World, and before a small Number of chosen Witnesses ; but frequently, and almost every Day for the Space of near four Years, upon all Occasions, and at all Hours indiscriminately, in the Face of the Sun, and in the Sight of Thousands, Foes as well as Friends, in the open Country, in Towns and Villages, all over *Judea* and *Galilee*, and in the Places of the most public Resort, even in the Synagogues, and in the Temple of *Jerusalem* ; but especially *since* they themselves had received the Power of working the very same Miracles, and even of communicating that Power to others, by the Imposition of their Hands, and the Invocation of the Name of *Christ* : So that they could no more doubt of the Truth and Reality of those Miracles, than they could doubt of their own Existence.

And

And now I appeal to Mr. Chubb himself, is this like a *catching Delusion*? or could there be any such thing? Indeed, Fear, Ignorance, Superstition (which is but a Compound of both) Giddiness, or Oversight, may operate that Way. “ Thus, says he ^a, when
“ a Nation is threatned with a foreign In-
“ vasion, or when the People’s *Fears* are
“ any other Ways alarmed with the Expec-
“ tation of War, if *one* Man imagines that
“ he *sees* Armies fighting in the Clouds, and
“ if he *reports* it to others, then they are
“ apt to imagine that *they see* the same;
“ whereas if each of those who heard the
“ Report, had been *separated* from that
“ Company, and those *Fears*, they would not
“ have imagined that they had seen any such
“ Things.” Very true; and this Observa-
tion he might have confirmed by other In-
stances more to the Purpose, or by histo-
rical Facts. For Example, Father *Dechaies*,
one of the greatest *French* Mathematicians
that the last Age produced, tells us ^b, that
being at *Besançon* ^c, he saw at Noon-Day in
the Air the Figure of a Man of a prodigi-
ous Size, holding in his Hand a Sword,

^a P. 74.

^b See his *Cursus Mathematicus*, fol. Vol. II.

^c The capital City of *Franche-Comté*.

which

which he seemed to brandish against the Town ; but by a careful Observation he soon discovered, that this Appearance was nothing but the Reflection of the Sun from a Statue of a Saint placed at the Top of a Steeple ; which prevented the ill Effects that would otherwise have ensued : For had he not examined the Case, or had he been *enthusiastically* disposed, there is no doubt but he would have been frightened at the Sight, and reported that he had seen a threatening Sign from Heaven ; and that upon this Report the Inhabitants would have run into the same Belief, and have been seized with the greatest Consternation imaginable. Another Instance of a like Delusion is that recorded by Father *Maimbourg* in his *History of the Holy Wars*, Book V. He says, that after the Battle of *Iconium*, where the *Christians* got a complete Victory over the *Turks* with a very inconsiderable Loss on their Side, a Gentleman of Credit, named *Lewis de Helfenstein*, who was by no Means a Visionary, declared before the Emperor and the whole Army, upon his Oath and his Word of *Pilgrim of the St. Sepulchre*, and *Knight cross'd*, that in the Heat of the Action he saw *St. George* and *St. Victor* fighting on Horseback before the
the

the Squadrons; which was confirmed by the Report of several other People, and even of the *Turks* themselves that were taken Prisoners, who said, that they had seen at the Head of the *Christian* Army some Troops, all in white Apparel, which were no where to be found in that Army. This pretended Miracle was immediately looked upon as the Cause of so signal a Victory, and universally believed without any Hesitation; though it was all owing to Enthusiasm and Credulity, and but a true *catching Delusion*. *Maimbourg* himself cannot help shewing some Diffidence of it, when he will not take upon him to decide whether there was really something extraordinary in it, or whether it proceeded from an Imagination heated by repeated Stories of Squadrons, said to have been seen in the Air the first Campaigns of the *Holy Wars* ^a.

But are these Instances, to which Hundreds might be added out of the *Popish Legends* or *Heathen Histories*, to be compared with the Case of the Miracles reported in the *New Testament*? Or, because Mankind have often been deluded in Point of extraordinary Ope-

^a See Bayle's *Pensées diverses sur les Comètes*, &c. Tom. III. de ses *Oeuvres diverses*, Fol. p. 67.

rations,

rations, does it follow that they were *always* so? Or, because there have been *numberless false* Miracles, is it a just Inference that therefore there *never* were *true* ones? Mr. Chubb himself would be ashamed to argue so weakly, and therefore he admits in this Place the *Possibility*, at least, of true Miracles; only he does what he can to raise in his Reader's Mind such a Distrust and Suspicion about them, as may lead him to an absolute Rejection of them all. "For, *says he*,
 " though a Variety of supernatural Effects
 " MAY take Place, the Truth of which we
 " MAY be assured of upon good Grounds,
 " and consequently that we are not deceived
 " by others, nor ourselves; yet there may
 " be many others, of which our Senses
 " may be supposed to be Witnesses, which
 " when they are *thoroughly* considered, will
 " appear to be very *uncertain*; and if they
 " are brought as *Evidences* to prove the *Divinity* of a Revelation, the Proof arising
 " from them must therefore be *doubtful* and
 " *uncertain* also."

And the *Uncertainty* is still much greater, *it seems*, when the Truth of those Facts depends *only* upon the Report of others, and

the Story of them has passed through *several Hands*. Indeed that Evidence arising from *Eye-sight* is superior to that of *Testimony*, and equal to a *Demonstration*, no body ever denied. For, as this Author observes, *though we may be assured of our own Honesty and Integrity with Regard to the Point in Hand, yet we cannot be alike assured of the Honesty and Integrity of other Men*. But does it follow, that therefore the *Evidence of Testimony* is not to be depended upon? Are there not different Degrees of *Certainty*? And cannot *Testimony* be so circumstanced, as to afford a Degree of it sufficient to satisfy a reasonable Man, and even to oblige him to yield his Assent to the Truth of what is reported? If it can, as we shall see by and by it actually does in the Case before us, to what Purpose is this Difficulty raised? Is it in order to shew, that *a Story is less credible for having pass'd through several Hands*, or that the Probability of the Truth of Facts decreases in a gradual Proportion to the Length of Time elapsed since they were done? This is indeed what has been often alledged by *Deists*, and more especially by the Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 163. But it is so far from being true, that in
some

some particular Cases, such as that before us, the Probability may be said to increase, rather than decrease, in Process of Time.

That the Probability of the Truth of Facts well recorded, does not, as Deists pretend, decrease by Length of Time. This shewn in the Case of the Miracles mentioned in the New Testament.

It is true, a Testimony delivered and transmitted to Posterity by Word of Mouth only, or an *Oral Tradition* of Facts, may be altered or misrepresented; some of its most material Circumstances, by which one may judge of the Grounds of it, may be lost, and others forged in their stead; and the farther off it is from the Time of the first Delivery, the more it becomes liable to be thus abused: But when a *Testimony* is committed to Writing, with all the Circumstances that make for it, by the very Persons who gave it, or by Persons present at the Time it was given, and after it had been over and over publicly delivered upon the Spot where the Facts witnessed to happened; and when these Writings are immediately put into the Hands of Thousands of People greatly concerned and desirous to know the Truth of the Matter, into the Hands of whole Societies who make it their Duty to preserve them, and transmit them entire to the remotest Places and Generations: In such a Case, I say, a Testimony may *pass through several Hands,*

Hands, nay, through several Ages, even through ALL the Ages of the World, without losing any Thing of its *primitive* Evidence and Force; for the same Reasons why it was received as true at first, subsist still in all their Strength, being faithfully recorded. Time cannot alter them, as long as the Books in which they are contained remain in being. Now is not this exactly the Case of the Gospel-History, or of the Testimony given by the Apostles to the Truth of the miraculous Facts reported in it? Is it not impertinent to talk of the Probability of its wearing out gradually by Time, as of a Thing of Course? And supposing this to have some Appearance of Foundation, what Rule or Measure shall we go by? Shall we admit *Craig's* Calculation, and take it for granted that the highest Degree of the Probability of past Facts will come to nothing, and entirely vanish away after 3150 Years^a? Happily for us there is near one half of this Period of Time

^a See his *Theologiae Christianae Principia Mathematica*, printed in the Year 1699, p. 24, wherein he supposes, that of Course *Christ* must come to judge the World some time before the Expiration of those 3150 Years, because the Probability of his History will then be quite effaced and worn out. And this he thinks *St. Luke* expressly intimates by these Words, (ch. xviii. 8.) *When the Son of Man cometh, shall he*

Time, since our Saviour's Coming, still behind ; and it ill becomes *Deists* to endeavour to rob us of the Evidence arising from the Testimony of his Apostles, so long before it is worn out, and while we are still in full Possession of it.

But to be serious, were such a Calculation as true as it is chimerical, what would be the Consequence? Why, That all Histories, older than 3150 Years, especially those that relate to the Foundation of Empires and Republics, to the Invention or Improvement of Arts and Sciences, and the Fate of Nations, are but mere Fables ; that all that we know of the antient *Egyptians, Phœnicians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, &c.* has no Manner of Truth in it, and that those People never so much as existed : Which is so very absurd that it sufficiently confutes itself. And indeed, make what Calculation you please, fix a much longer Period for the total dwindling away of the Probability of Testimony, carry it back as far as History can reach, and the same Absurdity will recur ; because nothing can diminish that Probability, but the

find Faith upon the Earth ? As if Faith was used here to denote the Probability of the Gospel-History ; whereas it is plain that it signifies the Belief of Christianity in general. See Hammond upon the Place.

Diminu-

Diminution or Loss of some of the Circumstances which first procured Credit to the Testimony in Question ^a. But this Diminution or Loss cannot take Place, as long as there are Records extant which contain those Circumstances without any *material* Variation or Alteration. And that this is the Case of the Books of the *New Testament* has been so often and so clearly made out, that it would be abusing the Reader's Patience to dwell upon it ^b. In short, as the learned Author of *the Trial of the Witnesses*, &c. very well observes at the Close of that excellent Treatise ^c, " the Evidence (of the " Apostle's Testimony) was capable of being transmitted, and actually has been " transmitted to us, upon unquestionable Authority. And to allow the Evidence to " have been good in the first Ages, and " not in this, seems to me to be a Contradiction to the Rules of Reasoning. For " if we see enough to judge that the first " Ages had Reason to believe, we must needs " see at the same Time that it is reasonable " for us also to believe."

^a See *Ditton* on the Resurrection, &c. Part II. p. 15.

^b See especially Dr. Bentley's *Philaleutherus Lipsiensis*, *Mill. Proleg.* and the Bishop of London's third *Pastoral Letter*.

^c P. 109.

The Evidence of the Truth of those Miracles is so far from decreasing by Length of Time, that it actually increases, by new Circumstances attending it; such as,
 I. The continual Enquiry made by the most able Men into the Truth of them.

And indeed the Evidence of a Testimony faithfully recorded and handed down, is not only the *same* for all succeeding Generations, *i. e.* as strong and obligatory as it was at first; but such *new* Circumstances may in Length of Time attend it, as will even increase it, by affording *new* Motives of Credibility; which is the Case of the Gospel-History. For having been received as true for many Ages, without any Interruption or Contradiction, by the wisest and soberest Part of Mankind, this must needs add Weight to the Proofs which *Christians* had at first of its *Authenticness*. The more it has been carefully looked into, the longer it has stood the Examination of able and impartial Judges, of Men of Learning and Industry, of Integrity and Candour^a, nay of

Ene-

^a Those that embraced *Christianity* at first were not all vulgar illiterate People, Men of no Note and no Character, as its Enemies of old were wont to object (See *Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* cap. xviii. xix.) and our modern Infidels would fain have the World believe, in order to shew that its Reception was entirely owing to Ignorance and Credulity. For among the converted *Jews* we find considerable Men in the *Sanhedrim*, or Senate, Doctors of the Law, and Rulers of Synagogues, *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, Persons of a liberal Education and even of great Learning, such as *Nicodemus*, *Joseph of Arimathea*, *Jairus*, *Manaen*, *Silas*, *Aquillas*, *Apollos*, *Timothy*, and *St. Paul* himself who was brought up at the Feet of the famous *Gamaliel*, &c; and among the *Gentiles* we meet

Enemies^b, as well as Friends to the *Christian* Cause, in different Places and Countries, who have

meet with Officers of Note, Judges, Pro-consuls, noble Men and Women, and even Courtiers, Orators, Grammarians, and Philosophers, such as *Cornelius, Sergius Paulus, Dionysius Areopagus, Tyrannus, Erastus, Publius, Philemon, Zenai, &c.* * and most of the Fathers, whose Writings or Fragments of Writings evidently shew to this Day their great Abilities and Learning, such as *Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus Antiochenus, Hermias, Tertullian, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Origen* (whose Fame was so great, that, as *Eusebius* tells us †, not only *Christians*, but Heathen Philosophers would resort to him for Instruction, dedicate their Books to him, and make him Judge of their Disputes) *St. Cyprian, Minutius Felix, Arnobius, Lactantius, &c.* And therefore *St. Jerom* who came after them, and was himself a very learned Man, says in answer to that trite Calumny of Infidels, *Let Celsus, Porphyry, Julian, those furious Enemies of Christ, and all their Followers, who imagine that the Church never had any Philosophers, Orators, or Doctors, for Members. Let them know how many Men of the most excellent Qualifications, Abilities, and Learning have either founded it, enlarged it, or been the Support and Ornament of it; and let them cease to reproach our Religion, as if it were only the Effect of a rustical Simplicity. Let them acknowledge their own Ignorance.* Hieron. Præf. in Catal. Script. Eccles.

^b If *Josephus* his Passage concerning our Saviour be genuine, which I am much inclined to think it is, especially after having read *Dr. Chapman's* Observation upon it in his *Eusebius, &c.* Vol. I. p. 386. he may be looked upon as a good Witness of the Truth of the Miracles recorded in the Gospel, though a professed Enemy to it as a *Jew*. For the Passage runs thus, "There was about that Time one *Jesus*, a wise Man, if he may be called a Man; for he did wonderful Works, was a Teacher of such as would readily embrace the Truth, and had many Followers, both *Jews* and *Hellenists*," (i. e. Profelytes from *Paganism* to *Judaism*). "This was the *Christ*," (or was by his Followers re-

* See the *Acts* throughout, and also *Philip* i. 13. iv. 22. † Hist. Eccl. Lib. vi. c. 18, 19.

have all acknowledged the Truth of it; the greater Reason we have, surely, to believe it, the

puted to be the *Messiah* expected by our Nation, and was called by that Name.) "And being accused by the Chief Men amongst us, he was crucified by *Pilate*; notwithstanding which, those that loved him before did not forsake him; for he appeared to them alive again on the third Day after. The holy Prophets have foretold these, and a thousand other wonderful Things of him," (*i. e.* concerning the *Messiah* mentioned before) *Antiq. L. xviii. c. 3. Edit. Haverc.* But even supposing that this Passage is interpolated, the very Silence of *Josephus* about our Saviour's Miracles, (for no where else has he taken the least Notice of them) will amount to a plain Confession of their Truth. For it is quite incredible, if he had thought them false, that he would have omitted to make Mention of them as such; especially considering the many Accounts he gives of Impostors who pretended to do wonderful Things; and that he lived very near the Time, and upon the very Spot wherein those Miracles were wrought; that he wanted neither Opportunity nor Inclination to discover the Fraud, if there had been any; and that he wrote after three of the four Gospels, which contain a particular Relation of them, were published. A Silence, thus circumstanced, is visibly affected, and could proceed from nothing but the Notoriety of those Facts, and a Consciousness of their being true. See Dr. *Chapman*, in the Place before cited.

To *Josephus* we may add the unbelieving *Jews* in general, who not only never attempted to disprove our Saviour's Miracles, but actually acknowledged the Reality of them. Witness their *Talmudic* Writers, who ascribe them either to *Magic-Arts*, or to the right Pronunciation of the Name *Jehovah*, which he learnt in the Temple, as has been before observed. And as to the *Heathens*, *Celsus*, who was the first that wrote against Christianity, does not deny the Facts, but pretends that *Christ* went into *Egypt*, where he learnt the Art of doing wonderful Works, and that his Apostles understood Magic, by which they did many Wonders. (See *Cels. apud Origen. p. 30, &c.*) *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, and *Julian*, who came after, Men of great Parts, and the bitterest Enemies the Gospel ever had, all plainly own the Miracles recorded

the clearer and stronger does its Evidence grow, because it is utterly improbable that so many Persons of so great a Character, or so much concerned in the Discovery of the Fraud, if there had been any, and living at such a Distance of Time and Place, should all either be mistaken in their Examination, or combine together to impose upon Mankind^c.

Another *new* Circumstance increasing the ^{II. The} Probability of the Miracles recorded in the ^{wonderful} Gospel, is the ^{Success of} the ^{the Gospel.} *Christian* Religion all over the World, of which we have undoubted Proofs, nay, which we now see with our own Eyes. The amazing *Quickness* and *Extensiveness* of the spreading of it, is in itself a very great Miracle, confirming all those that went before, as it cannot be accounted for, but upon the Supposition of their having been truly wrought. In less than thirty Years after our Saviour's Ascension, there were *Christians* all over the *Roman* Empire (which then comprehended almost all the known World) but

corded in it, by ascribing them likewise to *Magic*, and calling our Saviour a *Magician*; or by opposing his Works to the pretended Wonders of *Pythagoras*, *Appollonius Tyanæus*, and others. See *Julian's* Words *apud* *Cyrill.* p. 191, 213. *Hierocles apud* *Euseb.* p. 512. See also *Arnob. adv. Gent.* Lib. I. p. 25. *Lactant. Instit.* L. iv. c. 15, and v. c. 3.

^d See *Ditton* on the Resurrection, &c. Part II. Prop. 16. Schol 3.

espe-

especially at *Rome*, the great Metropolis of it, where *Nero* put a vast Multitude of them to Death^a. And about sixty-five Years after the same Event, and before all the Apostles were dead, their Number was so much encreased every where, that *Pliny*, Pro-consul of *Bitbynia*, in his Letter to the Emperor *Trajan* (wherein he gives him an Account of the *Christians*, then under a severe Persecution, and desires to know how he ought to proceed towards them) tells him, “ that the Thing seemed to him the more
 “ worthy of Consideration, as the Number
 “ of those who were in Danger of suffer-
 “ ing,” (i. e. of *Christians*, against whom penal Laws were enacted) “ was very great.
 “ For Multitudes, says he, of all Ages and
 “ Ranks, and of both Sexes, are, and will
 “ be prosecuted ; this Superstition (i. e. *Chri-*
 “ *stianity*) having over-run, like a Contagion,
 “ not only Cities and Towns, but the very
 “ Villages and the Country, though I think
 “ a Stop may be put to it. And indeed it is
 “ pretty certain that the Temples of the Gods,
 “ which were almost desolate, begin to be fre-
 “ quented again ; the sacred Ceremonies that

^a See *Suet. in Nerone*, c. xvi. and *Tacit. Annal. Lib. xv. c. 44.*

“ had

“ had been long discontinued, are celebrated
“ anew, and Victims are now daily brought,
“ which formerly People would very seldom
“ buy ^a.” Thus the Gospel, gaining Ground
every Day, and spreading with an incredible
Swiftness, prevailed over all the Persecutions
and Oppositions, all the Lusts, Prejudices, and
present Interests of Mankind, and was at last
embraced and established by a *Roman* Empe-
ror; so that in less than three Centuries, it
became the common Religion of the whole
Empire, nay of many savage Nations and
Barbarian Countries, where the *Roman*
Name was never so much as heard of ^b.

Now to what can this wonderful Success
be ascribed, but to a supernatural Assistance
and Power? Human Means there were none;
neither Birth, Riches, Grandeur, Authori-
ty, Eloquence, Wit, nor Learning in the
first Preachers and Publishers of the Gospel;
nor any Attractives in the Gospel itself for
vain, conceited, depraved, worldly-minded
Men; no Prospect of temporal Advantage or
Pleasure, nothing but the Force of Truth
that could engage to the Belief of it. Every

^a Plin. Epist. Lib. x. Epist. 97. ^b See Just. Mart.
Apol. 2. & Dial. cum Tryph. Tertul. Apol. & adv. Jud.
Iren. advers. Hæres. & Euseb. de Præpar. Evang. Lib. vi.
c. 10. See also Grotius de Ver. Rel. Chr. p. 185, &c.

Thing in Nature besides was against it, and strongly opposed it, *viz.* the mean Extraction and Circumstances of the Apostles, the great Contempt in which their very Nation was held by all the rest of the World, their Want for the most Part of Learning, Skill, and fine Address; the Sublimity of the *Christian* Doctrine, and the strict Purity of its Precepts, so opposite to the false Notions and Prejudices, the false Taste, and false Philosophy then in vogue, to the Idolatry and Corruption, the Passions and Practices of Mankind; the Powers of the World, the Cunning and Policy of Priests, the Wit and Malice of famous Philosophers, Orators, and Lawyers, who were little better than Atheists; all combined together to extinguish it in its Infancy; and the continual Perils and Sufferings, Crosses and Persecutions, attending the Profession of it for near three Centuries. In Spite of all these Obstacles, and of the Want of all human Advantages and Support, the Gospel made its Way in the World, and prevailed every where; which therefore must needs be owing to a supernatural Influence, to that *Demonstration of Spirit and Power*, which we are told accompanied the first Preachers of it. The Gift of Tongues especially

pecially was so absolutely necessary, that without it they never could have propagated their new Doctrine beyond the Borders of *Judea*, or at most of the neighbouring Countries. For though some of them, besides the *Syriac* or *Syro-chaldaic* their Mother-Tongue, understood the *Greek*, which was the common Language in *Lesser Asia*; how many Nations were there in the World, that understood neither? How many different Tongues, or Dialects of the same primitive Tongues were there, which the Apostles knew nothing of, and would have required the Life of a Man to learn, even with the greatest Capacity and Industry? Upon the whole then, the *wonderful* and *speedy* Propagation of the Gospel all over the World, is a *standing Miracle* that necessarily supposes, and therefore fully confirms, the Truth of all those that are reported in the *New Testament*. And this is an *additional* Degree of Evidence, (and indeed a very great one) which those that lived in our Saviour's Time had not, and even the *Christians* of the Apostolic Age did not enjoy in that ample Manner we now do. For we see Christianity much enlarged, and better established since those Days; we see it daily making

new

new Conquests, and spreading its divine Light in a *New World*, wherein it will go on triumphing and to triumph, as well as in other Parts of the Earth still unconverted, *until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in*: So that the additional Evidence arising from this Consideration, far from diminishing or wearing away by Length of Time, will afford to succeeding Generations, even to the End of the World, still *new*, or *greater and greater* Motives of Credibility.

III. *The Completion of several remarkable Prophecies, delivered by Christ, or his Apostles; which we now see.* A *third* Circumstance, which considerably increases the *Probability* arising from the Testimony of the Apostles in behalf of their own, or their Master's Miracles, is the exact *Accomplishment* we now see of several remarkable Predictions in the New Testament. The first I shall mention is that famous one, related by St. *Matthew*, - St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*, of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the total Overthrow of the *Jewish* Religion and Polity, which happened about forty-Years after. For that this was not a Prophecy forged after the Event, will plainly appear when I come to enquire into the Time when those *Evangelists* wrote their Gospels. And that it was most clearly fulfilled in all its Parts, is manifest from

many antient Histories, but more especially from *Josephus*, who has left us a very circumstantial Account of that dreadful Calamity, almost in our Saviour's own Words, or Words equivalent to them: And his Testimony is so much the more unquestionable, as he was both an Eye-Witness of it from the Beginning to the End, and of the same Nation and Religion with the *Jews*, and was so averse to Christianity, or rather biassed by political Views, that he has designedly avoided as much as he possibly could to take any Notice of the *Christian* Affairs, which however naturally fell in his Way, and he could not be ignorant of. And though this Event be of almost as old a Date as the first Establishment of the Gospel itself, yet as the Consequences of it still remain, and are visible in the present State of the *Jews*, we are no less certain of it, than if we had seen it with our own Eyes. Their Dispersion all over the Face of the Earth, without any Form of Government, or even of their Religion as prescribed by the Law of *Moses*; without any Knowledge of their own Genealogies, of the Tribes and Families to which they originally belonged; without any reasonable Hopes of ever recovering

vering their antient Properties, Liberties, and Privileges; and yet their remaining a distinct People, without ever incorporating, or mixing with the several Nations among which they live: This Dispersion, I say, which has now continued for near seventeen hundred Years, is a standing Monument of the Truth of our Saviour's Prediction, and will be so till the Time foretold, when *all Israel shall be saved* and embrace the Gospel ^a.

But besides this remarkable Prophecy, there are many others concerning the future Success of the Religion of *Christ* in the World, delivered all over the Gospels, either in exprefs Words, or in Parables and Similitudes; *viz.* the Persecutions and Sufferings which his Disciples and Followers should be exposed to upon that Account; the Opposition and Contradiction his Doctrine should meet with every where from the Wit and Policy, the Prejudices and Passions, the Interests and Power of Mankind; the many *false Christs* and *false Prophets*, that should *arise and deceive (if it were possible) the very Elect* ^b; the many *Heresies* that should spring up in the Church like *Tares*, and

^a Rom. xi. 26.^b Matt. xxiv. 24.

choak, or prevent the growing of the good Seed; and yet, in Spite of all these Obstacles, the amazing quick Propagation of Christianity, throughout all the then known World, its Prevalency over all other Religions, over *the Gates of Hell* itself, and the perpetual Increase of its Conquests, which should at last bring all Nations and People together in one Faith. These Things we now see punctually accomplished, or if any Part of the Accomplishment is still behind, we have all the Reason in the World to be persuaded that it also will take Place in its proper Time.

Thus again the Apostles have foretold several particular Circumstances of the future State of the Church of *Christ*, such especially as the general *Defection of Christians* from the true Faith, *the Man of Sin*, the *Son of Perdition*, the great *Anti-Christ*, described by St. Paul, 2 *Thess.* ii. 3, &c. 1 *Tim.* iv. 1, &c. and by St. John, 1 *Ep.* ii. 18, 19. *Revel.* xiii. 11, &c. I shall not here enter into a particular Examination of that Prophecy, which would carry me too far; but shall only observe, that if we are to judge of antient Predictions by the Event, or if the Event of Things be the true Key of antient Predictions,

Predictions, as it most certainly is, we see the full Accomplishment of it in the *Apostacy* of the *Western Church*, and in the Rise and Establishment of the *Papal Power*, which began in the sixth Century, and arrived at its highest Period in the ninth. Is it not Matter of Fact that this Church by Degrees corrupted, and at last renounced the primitive Purity of the *Christian Faith*? that it fell into gross Errors, into monstrous Ignorance, Superstition, and Idolatry, and exercised the greatest and most abominable Tyranny over the Consciences of Men? Did not the *Popes*, the great Promoters and Abettors of that horrible *Defection*, aggrandize themselves at the Expence of every thing that is sacred and praise-worthy? Have they not usurp'd a divine Authority and Infallibility in religious Matters, *sat in the Temple*, or in the Church of God, *shewing themselves*, or behaving *as if they were Gods*^a, impiously acting as such, claiming divine Attributes, and divine Honours, and suffering the very Name of God to be given them^b? Have they not *opposed*
and

^a 2 Thess. ii 4.

^b They arrogate to themselves a perfect Infallibility and supreme Authority both in spiritual and temporal Matters, an absolute Power of remitting or retaining Sins, and absolving Sinners both from the Guilt and Punishment

and exalted themselves above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, or is sacred, by dispensing with the Laws of God^c, assuming

Punishment of Sin. In the Fulness of their Power, say the Canonists, they dispense with the Law, and against the Law, against the Apostle, and the Canon of the Apostles, nay, against the Gospel itself, by explaining it. (Titul. 8. de Concess. Præbend. Distinct. 34. Canon. lector. Causa 25. Quæst.) They are called, not only by their Courtiers and Flatterers, but by their Councils, MOST HOLY FATHER, MOST HOLY LORD, *Sanctissimus Pater*, *Sanctissimus Dominus noster*, and declared to become actually Saints at their Election, through the Merits of St. Peter, Baron. ad ann. 1076. Concil. Trident. passim. On the Eve of their celebrating in Pontificalibus, a Deacon gives public Notice of it in these Words. *Crasina die Sanctissimus portabit Sanctissimum*, To-morrow the Most Holy, i. e. the Pope, will carry the most Holy, i. e. Jesus Christ. They have suffered the very Name of God to be given them, *Alter Deus in Terris*, another God on Earth; nay, *Supremum in Terris Numen*, the supreme or sovereign Deity on Earth, *Dominus Deus Noster*, our Lord God, &c. (See the Councils, & Constit. Clement. & Extravagant. Decret. Pontif. Rom. Ritual. &c.) And in Consequence of all these divine Attributes and Appellations, they have divine Honours paid them, a religious Adoration and Worship rendered them; which is practised every Day by Persons of all Ranks and Orders, even Kings and Emperors, prostrating themselves at their Feet and kissing their Toes; and immediately after their Election, they are placed upon the great Altar (as if they were instead of the God who is there worshipped) to receive, amidst the Acclamations and Prostrations of the People, the Homage of the Cardinals, which is therefore called in their own Stile *Adoration*, to go to the *Adoration*, &c. And indeed the last Council of Lateran (Sess. x.) expressly enacts, that the Pope ought to be adored by all People and Nations, because he is perfectly like to God. What monstrous Impiety!

^c This has been shewn already in the foregoing Note; I shall only instance in a few Particulars. The Pope dispenses with the Prohibition of Marriage given by God himself, in particular

ing a Superiority over Kings and Princes of the Earth, who are called *Gods* in Scripture, invading their Lands, excommunicating and deposing them, and giving their Dominions to whomsoever they pleased ^d? Nay, by pretending to be above Saints and Angels, and the

ticular Degrees of Consanguinity or Affinity. He dispenses with lawful Oaths and Vows, but especially he absolves Subjects from the Oath of Allegiance to their Sovereigns when excommunicated. Nay, he may be said to dispense with the Practice of Virtue in general, by his granting *Indulgences*, or Pardons of all Sorts of Sins, even of the blackest and most abominable ones, for a small Sum of Money, or some foolish superstitious Observance, or particular Service done to the Church, right or wrong, *per fas aut nefas*.

^d This is a well known Matter of Fact. Kings and Emperors have acknowledged the Pope's Authority over them; they have worshipped him, carried him upon their Shoulders in processional Solemnities, held his Stirrup, led his Mule, and waited on him at Table, as his Officers of State. They have submitted to his Decisions, Councils, Canons, Decretals, Bulls, in short to his Will and Pleasure. He blasphemously applies to himself these Words of our Saviour, (Matt. xxviii. 18) *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth*; and likewise what is foretold of the *Messiah*, *All the Kings of the Earth shall fall down before him*, (Psa. lxxii. 11.) Have not the Popes actually deposed many Kings and Emperors, such as the Emperors *Henry IV. Frederic I. and II.* and put others in their room? Have they not given the Kingdom of *Naples* to different Houses by Turns? and that of *England*, in King *John's* Time, to *Philip Augustus* King of *France*? Did not *Alexander VI.* make a Donation even of the *West-Indies* to the Kings of *Castille* and *Leon*, as if he had had an absolute Disposal of all the Kingdoms of the Earth, and in such an arrogant Style as plainly shews that he really thought so. Of our mere *Liberality* and certain Knowledge, says he, and in the Fulness of our *Apostolical* Power.—By the Authority of Almighty God committed unto

the most sacred Objects of their religious Worship^c. Has not their coming been after the working of Satan, with all Power and Signs, and lying Wonders^f? And have they not deceived them that dwell on the Earth, by Means of those Miracles^g? Every Body knows

unto us through St. Peter, and of our Vicarship of Christ which we exercise upon Earth, We give, grant, and assign for ever, by these Presents, to you, your Heirs and Successors to the Kingdoms of Castille and Leon, all the Islands and Continents discovered, and to be discovered in the West and in the South, together with all the Dominions, Cities, Fortifications, and Places belonging to them, and all their Jurisdictions, Privileges, Liberties and Appertenances whatsoever, &c. A true Copy this of the Devil's Language to our Saviour, *All the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them, will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*, Matth. iv. 8, 9.

^c This is plain from their canonizing the Saints, declaring them such, and ordering them to be worshipped; from their commanding Angels to carry the Souls of particular Persons out of Purgatory, or without passing through Purgatory, into Heaven; and from their requiring or suffering greater religious Honours to be paid themselves, than to Saints or Angels, or even to Christ himself, or any other Object of Religion. For according to the *Roman Ritual*, or *Ceremonial*, the Pope is to be carried upon the Shoulders of Kings, or of their Ambassadors, whilst the holy Host, or the Body of Christ, is only carried upon a white Horse; and when he is placed upon the great Altar for Adoration, the Host is removed, as if HE were greater than it. And indeed in all the Solemnities, wherein he appears, or celebrates in *Pontificalibus*, he is much more worshipped than the Host, or the Images of Saints and Angels; all the Eyes, and all the Devotions of the People are fixed upon him, as upon their God and Saviour. And therefore *Mendoza*, in *Quæstion. Scholast.* and the *Canonists*, *Can. Rom. Distinct. 10.* plainly say, *That he is greater than the Saints which are in Heaven, greater than the Angels themselves, and greater than the whole Church, and any thing that belongs to the Church.*

^f 2 Thess. ii.

^g Rev. xiii. 14.

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what a prodigious Number of false Miracles have been wrought in the Church of *Rome*, and authorized by their Popes; witness their *Legends* which are full of them, and the many Tricks and Impostures of their Monks and Priests that have been discovered, and proved upon them. And is it not by these pretended, or *lying Wonders*, that they have supported their unjust impious Claims, their wicked Errors and Superstitions, and seduced the Credulous and Ignorant, those *that believed not the Truth, and had Pleasure in Unrighteousness*^a? Nay, have not the Popes done *so great Wonders, that they have made Fire come down from Heaven on the Earth in the Sight of Men*^b? For what are their *Excommunications* and *Anathemas*, but so many *Imprecations*, whereby they call for *Fire from Heaven* upon the Heads of pretended *Heretics and Schismatics*; actually devoting them to *Hell-Fire*, and causing them in the mean Time, as far as it is in their Power, to be burnt alive? Do not these, like *Thunder* and *Lightning*, spread Fire every where with an incredible Swiftneſs, and consume every thing before them, setting Nations against Nations, the Father against the

^a 2 Theſſ. ii. 12.^b Rev. xiii. 13.

Son, and the Son against the Father, Subjects against their Sovereigns, and Sovereigns against their Subjects? Is it not a common Thing to call them the *Thunders of the Vatican*, and a consecrated Style at the Court of Rome to say, *to thunder out an Excommunication*, or *to fulminate a Bull*, instead of *to pronounce, declare, or publish it*, &c. Is not that Court, as foretold in the *Revelations*, *drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of Jesus*? What Bloodsheds and Massacres, what Wars and Persecutions she has been guilty of, every body knows who is the least acquainted with the History of past Ages. What Cruelties and Barbarities has she not either exercised or encouraged, for near a thousand Years, against the *Waldenses, Albigenſes, Bohemians, Lollards*, and *Protestants* of all Denominations, that is, against the best of Men and Christians, against *the Saints and Martyrs of Jesus*? Lastly, has not the Church of Rome taught *Doctrines of Devils*^a, or *Demons*, i. e. of inferior Deities, departed Souls, and Angels? Is not the Worship of Saints and Angels, and even of their Images, recommended, enjoined, and practised

^c *Ibid.* xvii. 6.

^a 1 Tim. iv. 1.

in that Church, so far as to make up the great Part of their Religion? Have not the *Popes forbid the Clergy to marry, and commanded all Christians to abstain from Meats which God hath created to be received with Thanksgiving of them which believe, and know the Truth, i. e. of the Faithful*^a? And do not the Generality of *Papists*, even now, look upon these Injunctions, though in themselves unlawful and tyrannical, as essential Parts of Christianity? In short, a Man must be wilfully blind, or strangely prejudiced, not to see that the Church of *Rome* has in Fact *apostatized*, and that the Popes are the true *Anti-Christ*s foretold by the Apostles. Never was any Prophecy more exactly fulfilled, than this appears now to be; and no Part of it remains unaccomplished, but the DOWN-FALL of that MAN OF SIN, AND SON OF PERDITION, of BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH; which seems to draw near; but however that be, God will certainly bring it about in his own good Time. All this is so very evident, that I should have taken it for granted, and not have dwelt so long upon it, was it not that

^a 1 Tim. iv.

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some Divines and learned Men among *Protestants*, being unwilling to apply that Prophecy to the Church of *Rome*, (for what Reason I know not, except it be out of a mistaken Charity, and too tender a Regard for that Church) have either looked for its Accomplishment in the first Ages of Christianity, among the Heretics, or Emperors of those Times, or *imagined*, (for it is really but an *Imagination*) that it is still unaccomplished, and will not come to pass till towards the latter End of the World.

And now, what Confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel-History does not this manifest Accomplishment of the remarkable Predictions, which we have been considering, afford? They relate to Things which could not be foreseen in a *natural* Way, being at a great Distance, and depending, for the most Part, upon the Will of free Agents. Nay, they were in many Particulars very *improbable*, and such as all the Wit of Man could never have *imagined* would come to pass. Was it at all *likely*, that the *Romans*, whose constant Practice, as well as Interest, it was to preserve the Nations conquered by their Arms, and let them quietly enjoy their Li-

erties and Properties, provided they submitted to their Authority and paid them a certain annual Tribute, would come to that Extremity of utterly destroying the *Jews* and their Republic, and that in less than XL Years? Especially, after they had governed them mildly enough so long^a, and the *Jews* themselves had born their Yoke so well, that far from shewing any Inclination to change, they seemed to be very much afraid lest their Loyalty should be suspected, and very attentive to prevent giving any Umbrage that Way. Witness what they said in Council, when they heard how *Christ* had raised *Lazarus* from the Dead, *If we let him thus alone, all Men*

^a The *Jews* had been Tributaries to the *Romans* above one hundred Years when that Prophecy was delivered. They were brought under this Subjection by the great *Pompey*, who restored *Hircanus*, their High-Priest and King, to his Office and Dignity, but on Condition that he should not wear a *Diadem*, and should pay an annual Tribute to the *Romans*. *Julius Caesar* soon after confirmed the same, and settled the High Priesthood and kingly Power in the Family of *Hircanus* for ever; and as long as he lived, the *Jews* quietly enjoyed all their Liberties and Privileges. After his Death, indeed, they suffered much by the Avarice of some of the *Roman* Generals, who plundered them, but still they retained and freely exercised their own antient Government and Religion. And the Troubles which they happened to be exposed to, during this Period, were more owing to their own private Dissentions and increasing Wickedness, than to the *Romans*, who aimed at nothing less than their Destruction, as plainly appeared in the Conduct of *Vespasian* and *Titus*, in the War that brought about their final Ruin.

will

*will believe on him (i. e. according to their Notion, acknowledge him for that great Prince and mighty Deliverer, whom they expected) and the Romans shall come and take away both our Place and Nation.—It is expedient for us that one Man should die for the People, and that the whole Nation perish not^b. And at his Trial, when Pilate asked them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief Priest answered, We have no King but Cæsar^c. Was it at all likely, that the Romans who at that Time were so civilized, so fond of outward Shew and Grandeur, and such great Admirers and Encouragers of Arts and Sciences, should demolish not only the City, but the Temple of *Jerusalem* which for Beauty, Magnificence, and Richness, exceeded any thing of that Kind in the World, and level them both with the Ground? That the *Jews*, supposing they should ever forget themselves so far as to run into an open Rebellion against the *Romans*, and provoke them to the utmost, should be dispersed by them all over the World, and reduced to such a Condition as never to be restored again, or at least not for a long Series of Ages, but led away Captives*

^b John xi 48, 50.

^c *Ibid.* xix. 15.

into

into all Nations, and Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles (i. e. of their Conversion to the Faith of Christ) be fulfilled^d? That God, who had so gloriously distinguished them from all the other People of the Earth, and had wrought so many Wonders in their Behalf for two thousand Years together, should at last forsake them in this most dreadful unparallel'd Manner? Could ever such a Thing as this enter into the Heart of any Man, much less of a Jew, naturally prepossessed in Favour of his own Nation and Religion, and acquainted with so many antient Prophecies, which seemed at first Sight to foretel quite another Fate? Was it at all likely, that the Gospel should prevail in the World by the Means, and in the Manner it did, in Spite of all the Opposition and Resistance it met with? Were not all *Appearances* against it? And should not our Saviour's own Experience of these very Obstacles, and the Prediction he gave of the Continuance of them after his Death, have naturally led him to a quite different Expectation, *viz.* that his Doctrine would soon be overpowered and come to nothing? *Lastly*, Was it at all

^d Luke xxi. 24.*likely,*

likely, that in the Church of *Christ* there should happen such a general Defection from the true Faith, as we now see? That there should arise such a *Man of Sin*, as the Apostles describe? And that the very Bishops and chief Pastors of that Church should by Degrees *apostatize*, and turn *Anti-Christ*s? No! All these Things were in themselves very improbable, and could not be foreseen, nor so much as guessed at, by any human Sagacity or Penetration; but must needs have been revealed by God, considering how perfectly the *Events* have answered the *Predictions*; and therefore *Christ* and his Apostles were God's true Messengers, and their Testimony concerning themselves and their Miracles, is unquestionable.

Lay all these *new* Circumstances or Considerations together, I mean, the *long Examination* and Scrutiny which the Gospel-History has stood, and *the Credit* given to it, both by Friends and Foes, for near seventeen hundred Years without any Interruption; the *wonderful Success* of the Christian Revelation all over the World; and the no less *wonderful Accomplishment* of several remarkable Predictions of our Saviour and his Apostles; all which we now *see*, and are *Witnesses* of:

Lay these Things together, I say, and judge whether the *Probability* of the Miracles reported in the Gospel, far from *diminishing* and *wearing away by Length of Time*, does not *daily increase* very sensibly and considerably. And in this the Wisdom of God most eminently appears, having ordered Matters so, that a *collateral, or corroborating Evidence* of those Miracles arises from *subsequent Facts* which have an immediate Connexion with them, and that this Evidence grows *stronger* in the same Proportion as the Time wherein they were wrought is *remoter*.

It would be endless to take Notice of all the trifling Difficulties, sophistical Reasonings, and malicious Insinuations, which are to be met with in Mr. *Chubb's Discourse on Miracles*, &c. There is hardly a Page but what deserves Correction. I shall therefore only examine two or three of the most material Objections that are still behind, and have a great Weight with Infidels, and so conclude this *Treatise*, which begins already to swell to a Size.

Among the various Circumstances which either strengthen or weaken the Report of Miracles, he insists chiefly upon the following;

ing; " If those Facts, says he ^a, are entered upon *Record*; and if those Records are to be *Evidences* of the *Truth* of those Facts in *future Times*, and to *Posterity*; then the *Credit* of such Records may be stronger or weaker, according to the various and different *Circumstances* which may attend them. As thus, the Facts may be entered upon Record at the *Time* of Performance, and those Records may be made *so* public at the *Time* and *Place* of Action, as may not only *dispose*, but render it very easy for inquisitive Persons, who live upon the Spot, to examine the Case thoroughly, by examining both the *Record* and the *Evidences* of the Facts which are to support the *Credit* of that Record; or the Facts may be entered upon Record, *ten, twenty, or thirty Years* after Performance, and may be made public in Places *far distant* from the Place of Action, or be kept as a *sacred Treasure* in the Hands of *Believers*. The former of these very much strengthens, and the latter very much weakens the *Credit* of such Records."

^a P. 80, 81.

Here

Here are *three* Things, which, applied to the Writings of the *New Testament*, (for though Mr. *Chubb* does not make this Application in exprefs Words, it is plain he intends it) *very much weaken*, according to his Opinion, the Credit of those Writings, and consequently of the Miracles recorded in them; *First*, The Time when they were wrote: *Secondly*, The Place wherein they were published; and *Thirdly*, The Manner in which they were kept by the primitive Christians. But if we inquire strictly into these Things, we shall find that they do not in the least affect the Truth of the Gospel-History, and therefore are nothing to the Purpose.

That the Time in which the Gospels, especially the three first, were wrote, is not, nor can be, any Objection against the Truth of the Miracles reported in them.

First then, I observe in general, that there is no Manner of Necessity that the Records of past Facts be wrote at the *very Time of Action*, as Mr. *Chubb* here supposes. It is enough if they are but penned within the Memory of Man, or whilst there are a competent Number of Witnesses still living. And certainly, for *public* Transactions to be recorded *ten, twenty, or thirty Years* after the Event, can never be any Objection to their *Credibility*; else, what would become of most Histories, the Truth of which was never doubted

doubted of, though they were published even after a much longer Period of Time? Nay, there may be, and generally there are, good Reasons for deferring such a Publication; Interest, Passion, or Prejudice, may easily bias an Historian who writes at the Time of Action; or, if he delivers nothing but what is true, and all that is true, (which is seldom the Case) he will hardly meet with a general Acceptance; the World will be divided about it, according to their different Humours and Pre-conceptions; so that upon the whole, it is better and fitter that Histories should be published some considerable Time after the Facts, when the Passions which they have raised or occasioned, are removed or at least cooled, and no Motive could induce the Writers to conceal, disguise, or alter the Truth, nor the Readers to oppose and reject it: Provided always, that there be still sufficient Witnesses, or Monuments of those Facts, and that the Fraud might still be easily detected, if there was any.

This general Observation, it is true, cannot very well be applied to the Case of the Apostles, who were divinely assisted in writing their Books, and soon after their Master's

ster's Departure publicly preached to the World concerning his Miracles, especially his glorious Resurrection and Ascension into Heaven; which was much the same as publishing his History in Writing. But this very thing shews, that there was no Necessity that they should write it immediately: For, besides that they had been Eye-Witnesses of those Miracles which were so remarkable and astonishing that they could not easily be forgotten or mistaken; if the Apostles were divinely assisted, there was no Danger of their losing the Remembrance of them, either in Whole or in Part, or misrepresenting them to the World, tho' they should have deferred committing them to Writing ever so long. The *Holy Ghost* which they received, according to their Master's Promise and Appointment, was to *teach them all Things*, to *bring all Things to their Remembrance*, and to *guide them into all Truth*^a. Moreover, the Nature of their Office and Commission required, that they should *first* preach, or publish by Word of Mouth, our Saviour's Doctrine and Miracles. He had commanded them to *go and teach all Nations, and to baptize them in the Name of the Fa-*

^a John xiv. 26. xvi. 13.

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ther, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to go into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature^b. And they were to confirm it by new Miracles, which could not take Place, had they contented themselves with spreading their Doctrine by Writing. Add to this, that the Art of Printing not being yet known, the Gospel must have made a very slow Progress that Way; whereas the Apostles going from Place to Place, and sending their Disciples all over the World, to plant it and confirm it by repeated Signs and Wonders; its Propagation must certainly be infinitely quicker, especially if we consider, that teaching by Word of Mouth is a much better and speedier Method of Instruction, than by Writing. And therefore it was proper in the Nature of the Thing, as well as agreeable to their Commission, that the Apostles should preach, establish, and propagate their Doctrine *before* they committed it to Writing.

Accordingly we find, that they wrote their *Gospels*, in Places where Christianity was actually planted, and their *Epistles*, to Churches which had already embraced it; and this in order to supply the Want of their Presence,

^b Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15.

or the Defect of some private Accounts of the Life of *Christ* which were soon published^c, to prevent the Rise or Spreading of Errors and Heresies, and to be standing Records of their Preaching, and a Rule of Faith for all succeeding Ages. Had they been Impostors, they would have been forward enough to publish Books of their own. Witness the antient Heretics, who forged so many Gospels, Epistles, &c. under the Names of the Apostles; some of which were published even before the Death of St. *John*: Witness likewise *Mahomet*, who would daily spread abroad his pretended Visions and Revelations in Writing: And if the Apostles did not write their Master's Life and Doctrine *immediately after* his Death, neither did they defer it *too long*, *i. e.* to such a Time as might give room for the least Suspicion of Fraud. *Matthew*, according to the general Tradition, published his Gospel in *Judea*, and for the Use of the *Jews*, about *fifteen* Years after our Saviour's Ascension, which is contradicted by none of the primitive Fathers but *Irenæus*, who says, that he wrote it whilst *Peter* and *Paul* were at *Rome*

^d See Luke i. 1, 2.

preaching

preaching the Gospel, and establishing the Church^a. But he is manifestly mistaken; for besides that it is very uncertain whether these two Apostles were ever at *Rome* together, it is plain from the Epistle to the *Romans*, which we know was wrote in the *LVIII* Year of our Lord^b, that *St. Paul* had not been there as yet. It was but in *LXV*, or *LXVI*, that he went thither, so that *St. Matthew's* Gospel must, at the soonest, have been penn'd at that Time; which is not in the least probable, since *St. Luke's* Gospel was then actually published, as we shall see presently, and it appears by the Beginning of it, that there were already other Gospels extant, which must have a Reference to *St. Matthew's*. Besides, if this Apostle wrote in *Judea*, it must have been before the Dispersion of the Apostles, which happened *twelve* Years after our Saviour's Ascension, when according to the Tradition, he went into *Ethiopia* or *Parthia*^c. Probably *Irenæus* has confounded the Times, and supposed that *Peter* and *Paul* went to *Rome* in the Beginning of the Reign of *Claudius*,

^a *Iren. Lib. iii. c. 1. adv. Hæres. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. v. c. 8.* ^b See *Mills's Prolegom.* ^c *Euseb. Hist. Eccl. L. iii. c. 24.*

in which it is agreed by all the rest of the Fathers, that this Gospel was wrote.

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But not to insist upon this, and in order to prevent all Cavils, I shall shew that the three first Gospels were wrote sometime before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, which happened about *thirty-six* Years after our Saviour's Death. We find in all of them his Prediction of that memorable Event, and had these Books been published after it, they would have been looked upon as mere Forgeries, and universally rejected as such. Moreover, this Prediction is laid down in such Terms as seem to foretel both the Overthrow of the *Jewish* Nation, and the End of the World. But it is inconceivable, that if it had been forged after the Event, the Authors of it would have thus blended those two Things together, and delivered the Prediction of them in such an obscure Manner. For it was this very Obscurity that gave Rise, not only to the general Opinion of the Christians of those Times, that the Destruction of the World was near at Hand ^a, but also to the Objection of the Unbelievers and the Profane, that though *Jerusalem* was levelled to the Ground,

^a See especially 2 Thess. ii.

the World subsisted still, as we read in St. Peter's second Epistle, c. iii. Now, would not Impostors have expressed themselves so as to prevent this Objection, *i. e.* in a clear and precise Manner, without multiplying and confounding the Objects? Let me add, that in these three Gospels, there is not the least Sign of their having been compiled after the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, nor one Word dropp'd that has the least Reference to the miserable Condition the *Jews* were then reduced to; which is really surprizing, if they had been published so late. The Authors of them speak all along of the Temple as then standing, and of the Nation as being still in a State of Peace and Quiet. Knaves and Deceivers are apt to betray themselves, they seldom go long undetected, and an inquisitive careful Examiner will soon find them out. But here nothing like it has ever appeared, and the ablest Critics have not been able to discover the least Ground of Suspicion. We cannot therefore doubt but that the Gospels of St. *Matthew*, St. *Mark*, and St. *Luke*, were wrote some Time before the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; I say *some Time before*, because the *Jewish* War which brought it about, lasted some Years, and

there were long before, such Commotions and Troubles in *Judea*, as sufficiently portended the Miseries that were to follow; so that a Prediction of them; published at that Juncture, had nothing very extraordinary in it, and perhaps might not pass for divine. From whence it is natural to conclude, that these Books, to obtain their intended Effect, must have been compiled some Years before that memorable Event; which will bring the Time of their Publication within less than *thirty* Years from the Death of *Christ*.

The same Thing may be proved another Way. By comparing *St. Luke* with the two first *Evangelists*, it plainly appears that he had seen their Gospels; for he often makes use, not only of their peculiar Words, but their very Phrases, and takes from them whole Descriptions of particular Facts^b. If it be said, that they might as well have borrowed them from him; this is manifestly contrary to the general Tradition, which supposes that *Matthew* and *Mark* wrote before *Luke*; besides that it is quite improbable that an *Apostle*, as *Matthew* was, and an Eye-witness of the Facts which he reports, would borrow from an *Evangelist*,

^b See *Mills's Prolegom.*

who

who himself declares that he had not seen them^c. Now, St. *Luke* published his *Gospel* before the *Acts of the Apostles*, for he visibly refers to it in the Beginning of this latter Book, *The former Treatise*, says he^d, *have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, until the Day in which he was taken up.* And that the *Acts* were wrote about the Year of our Lord *sixty-two* or *three*, plainly appears from this Particular, that it ends with St. *Paul's* first Imprisonment at *Rome*, out of which he was delivered in *sixty-two*. For had St. *Luke* compiled this Book later, he would no doubt have added what happened to that Apostle afterwards, his last Voyage into *Asia*, his Return to *Rome*, and chiefly his Martyrdom there, which is by some placed in the Year *sixty-five*, and by others *sixty-seven*^e. Is it in the least probable, that he who was St. *Paul's* Convert, favourite Disciple, and Fellow-labourer, and had made it his Business to give a more particular Account of that Apostle than of all the rest, would have omitted such material Passages, which reflected infinite Honour on his Master, as they

^c Luke i. 2.

^d *Acts* i. 1, 2.

^e See *Pearson's Annal. Paul*, and Father *Pagi* upon *Baronius*.

were most evident Testimonies of his fervent Zeal for the Propagation of the Gospel, and the Glory of *Christ*? Does not this Omission plainly shew that the *Acts* were wrote before those Transactions, that is, at farthest in the Year *sixty-three*? And as *St. Luke's* Gospel was anterior to that Book, and could not very well have been compiled during *St. Paul's* Imprisonment, when, besides his Attendance upon him, the Care of the Church abroad must have taken up all his Time; we may safely place the Date of it *three* Years sooner, viz. in LX. Now if it be so, the three first Gospels were published, within twenty-five or twenty-six Years after our Saviour's Ascension, and while all the Apostles, except *St. James*, whom *Herod Agrippa* put to Death, were still living, and would no doubt have disowned them if they had been forged. But so far from it, we know that they approved them; the general Tradition being that *Mark*, who was *St. Peter's* Disciple and Fellow-Labourer compiled his Gospel from that Apostle's Discourses or Preaching, and with his Approbation and Direction^a. *St. Luke* de-

^a *Eusebius Hist. Eccles.* Lib. iii. c. 25. Lib. v. c. 28. and Lib. vi. c. 14. See *Mills's Prolegom.* and *Clerici Harmonia Evangelica*, Dissert. III.

clares that what he relates he had from those who were, *from the beginning*, not only *Eye-witnesses*, but also *Ministers of the Word*, i. e. Apostles. And as St. *John* wrote his Gospel long after the others, he must have seen them, and his agreeing with them in the main, clearly shews that he approved them; which is confirmed by Church-History, wherein we read, that after having publicly given his Approbation of the *three* first Gospels, he wrote his own, at the request of the Faithful, or of the Bishops of *Asia*, to supply what they had omitted ^b, or, as *Irenæus*, and after him St. *Jerom*, says ^c, to confute the Heresies of *Cerintus* and *Ebion*, who denied the *Divinity* of our Saviour: And indeed, both these Designs clearly appear throughout his Gospel.

As to the Time wherein he wrote it, tho' it was very late, that is about the Year of our Lord xcvii. yet this can be no Objection against it. For as he relates nothing more incredible than what the three first *Evangelists* published, and he agrees with them in the most material Facts, he cannot justly be sus-
Though the Gospel of St. John was published many Years after that Destruction, yet this does not in the least affect the Truth of it.

^b See *Euseb.* Lib. iii. c. 24.
Matth.

^d See *Mills's Prolegom.*

^c *Hierom. Proæm. in Truth of it.*

pected

pected of Fraud. Nay, had he wrote the first, there is no doubt but that as he was the favourite Disciple of *Christ*, and, as it were, his Bosom Friend, Infidels would have imagined that he had exaggerated in Favour of his Master : And therefore to prevent all future Suspicions and Cavils, Providence has very wisely ordered Matters so, that he has not only wrote the last, but even at a great Distance from the rest, and when the Credit of our Saviour's Miracles was actually established in the World ; in which Light, his Gospel is a strong *Confirmation* of, as well as a true *Supplement* to the three first. Moreover, it is very remarkable that no Mention is made in it of our Saviour's Prediction concerning the total Overthrow of *Jerusalem*, and the *Jewish* Nation ; for this clearly shews that it was composed after that fatal Event, it being utterly incredible, that St. *John* would have omitted such a material Passage, if he had wrote before it. But perhaps it will be said, that it is very surprizing he did not at least take Notice of the Accomplishment of that Prediction, which was so proper to convince both the *Jews*, and the *Gentiles*, of the Truth of the Gospel. In order
to

to clear this Difficulty, I shall observe *first*, with a very ingenious Author*, that “ this remarkable Silence of the beloved Disciple, with regard to Prophecies of such Importance to the Credit of his Lord and his Religion, was ordered from above, lest Unbelievers should say, what some have said of the Predictions of *Daniel*, that they were written after the Event.” *Secondly*, If St. *John* had only mentioned the *Accomplishment*, and referred for the Prophecy to *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, he had done a very needless Thing, since the Destruction of *Jerusalem* was a Fact of such a Notoriety, that no Man could be either unacquainted with it, or in the least doubtful of it, or at a Loss to compare it with the Prediction of *Christ*, the three first Gospels being then in the Hands of every Body. *Thirdly*, The Business of St. *John* was to give a particular Account of our Saviour’s Life and Doctrine, and not to write a History of what happened after his Death ; especially considering, that many Years before he compiled his Gos-

* Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, by *Gilbert West*, Esq; p. 393, 394.

pel, *Josephus* had published his *History* of the *Jewish Wars*, which was soon dispersed all over the World : And therefore, as it was unnecessary for St. *John* to give a Description of the sad Fate of the *Jews*, in order to shew its Agreement with our Lord's Prediction, so was it not within his Province ; and there is no Reason to wonder at his Silence, much less to alledge it against his Veracity.

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they bear.*

And that the four Gospels were truly wrote by the Persons whose Names they bear, and are therefore *Authentic*, we have all the Evidence that can reasonably be desir'd. But as the Discussion of this Point would carry me too far, I must refer the Reader to those learned Men who have treated it professedly^a ; though at the same Time I cannot help taking Notice of some Things that have not so commonly been attended to, and yet are obvious enough. *First* then, it is to be considered that the *Titles* which are

^a See *Mills's* Prolegom. *Dupin's* Canon of the New Testament ; *Whitby's* Pref. Discourses to the four Gospels. The Bishop of *London's* third Pastoral Letter, and Mr. *West's* Observations, &c. p. 307, &c. where the Reader will find exceeding good Remarks, and some of them quite new ; tho' the great Excellency of this Book is to reconcile the *Evangelists* concerning the Particulars of our Saviour's Resurrection, which is there done much better than any where else.

prefixed

prefixed to these Books, and express the Names of *Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John*, were originally inserted by those Authors themselves. For this was a general Custom among the Antients, as appears from *Tully, Aulus Gellius, Pliny, &c*; and no reason can be alledged why the *Evangelists* should not have followed it; nay, very good Reasons may be given why they should, such as ascertaining the Genuineness of their own Gospels. Besides, the Apostles themselves constantly follow this Custom in their Epistles, prefacing them with their proper Names and Qualifications. And there is a Passage in *Tertullian*, who flourished in the *second* Century, which plainly shews that even before his Time the Gospels had these Titles; for he objects to *Marcion*^b, that *his Gospel had not the Name of any Author prefixed to it*, taking it for granted that this was a Mark of Genuineness, to be met with in the Gospels of the four *Evangelists*. If *Chrysostom* has affirmed that these *Titles* were not inserted by the Apostles themselves, but by the Christians of the *first* or *second* Century^c, he is too late to be depended upon in such a Matter

^b *Tertull.* Lib. 4. cont. Marc. c. 2.
in Epist. ad Rom.

^c *Hom.* 1.

as this, against the general Tradition of the Church. And indeed, not only the oldest Manuscripts extant have the Names of the *Evangelists* prefixed to them; but moreover it appears by the Books of the most antient Fathers, that the Copies which they made use of had such *Titles*^d. It can therefore hardly be doubted but that these *Titles* were affixed by the Authors themselves, seeing they had sufficient Reasons to write them, and soon after the Death of St. *John*, the Copies then in being had them.

I observe *Secondly*, that all the primitive Fathers of the Church, whose Writings, or Fragments of Writings we have, do mention these *four* Gospels by Name, as the only true genuine ones that ever were published, and as the Rule of Faith to all Christians. *Irenæus* has a whole Chapter upon this Subject, (Lib. iii. c. 2.) which in an old Version is entituled thus^e, *A Proof that there can be neither more nor less than four Gospels*; And he expressly says^f, that *they were*

^d *Iren.* L. ii. c. 1. *Origen.* apud Euseb. L. vi. c. 25. *Iust. Mart.* 2. Ap. *Tatian.* *Diateffaron*, &c.

^e *Ostensio quod neque plura, nec minus quam quatuor possent esse Evangelia.*

^f *Quod quidem Evangelium tunc præconiaverunt, postea verò per Dei Voluntatem in Scripturis nobis tradiderunt, fundamentum & columnam Fidei nostræ futurum.* *Iren.* L. iii. c. 1.

wrote by the Will of God to be the Pillar and Foundation of the Christian Faith. And Origen in a Fragment preserved by Eusebius, says^z, “ What I have learnt from the Tradition concerning the *four* Gospels, which “ are the *only ones* received without any “ Controversy by the universal Church of “ *Christ* under Heaven, is, that the *first* “ Gospel was wrote by *Matthew* a Publican, “ but afterwards an Apostle of *Jesus Christ*, “ who published it in *Hebrew* among those “ that renounced *Judaism* to embrace the “ *Christian* Faith. The *second* is that of “ *Mark*, who compiled it from the Mouth “ of *Peter*; and therefore *Peter* in his *Catholic* Epistle” (meaning the *first* Epistle, for the *second* was not yet admitted into the Canon) “ calls him his *Son*, when he says, “ *The Church that is at Babylon elected together with you, saluteth you, and so doeth Marcus my Son.* The *third* Gospel, which “ is that of *Luke*, and commended by St. “ *Paul*, was wrote in favour of the *Gentiles*; “ and the last is the Gospel of St. *John*.” These Quotations, to which many more might be added, render it very probable that the Canon of the four Gospels was settled

^z Euseb. Hist. Eccl. Lib. 6. c. 25.

soon after the Publication of the last, before the Death of St. *John*, and by his Authority. For if they were universally received as a Rule of Faith about the Middle of the *second* Century, as we see they were, even so far as to be read publicly on the Lord's Day, together with the Writings of the *Prophets*^h; we can hardly doubt but that they had been declared *Authentic*, and put into the Hands of all *Christians* in that Apostle's Life-time, towards the Close of the *first* Centuryⁱ: Especially if we consider his Zeal for the Propagation of his beloved Master's Doctrine, and what the primitive Fathers report of him, that he approved the three first Gospels, and wrote his own to be joined with them, and make up together a complete History of our Lord, and a Rule of Faith, as has been already observed. And what very much increases the Probability of the *Evangelical Canon* being settled so early, is,

Thirdly, That though so soon as the Beginning of the *second* Century, there were *spurious* Books vented as *Apostolical*, and ma-

^h For the Proof of this see *Just. Mart. Apol. ii. Iren. L. iii. c. 11, 12. Apost. Constit. L. ii. c. 51.*

ⁱ See *Mill's Proleg. Cleric. Harmon. Evangel. Diss. III.*

ny Sects of *Heretics* who had departed from the Faith in very essential Points, and led a very immoral Life; yet they all of them acknowledged the Truth of our Saviour's Miracles, and admitted as authentic some one or other of the *four* Gospels, though with some Interpolations and Alterations. This we learn from *Irenæus*, who, disputing against the Heretics of his Time, says^a, “The Authenticness of our Gospels is so very evident, that the Heretics themselves give Testimony to it, every one of them endeavouring to prove his Doctrine from those very Books. For the *Ebionites* make use of that only which is according to

^a Tanta est autem circa Evāgelia firmitas, ut & ipsi Hæretici Testimonium reddant eis, & ex ipsis egrediens unusquisque eorum conetur suam confirmare Doctrinam. *Ebionæi* etenim eo Evangelio quod est *secundum Matthæum*, solo utentes, ex illo ipso convincuntur, non rectè præsumentes de Domino. *Marcion* autem id quod est *secundum Lucam* circumcidens, ex his quæ adhuc servantur penes eum blasphemus in solum existentem Deum ostenditur. Qui autem Jesum separant à Christo, & impassibilem perseverasse Christum, passum verò Jesum dicunt, id quod *secundum Marcum* est præferentes Evangelium, cum amore veritatis legentes illud, corrigi possunt. Hi autem qui à *Valentino* sunt eo quod est *secundum Johannem* plenissime utentes, ad offensionem Conjugationum suarum, ex ipso deteguntur nihil rectè dicentes, quemadmodum ostendimus in primo Libro. Quando ergo hi qui contradicunt, nobis testimonium perhibent, & utuntur his firma & vera est nostra de illis ostensio. Neque plura numero quam hæc sunt, neque rursus pauciora capit esse Evangelia. *Iren. advers. Hæ. L. iii. c. ii.*

“ St. *Matthew*, and are by it shewn their
“ Errors concerning our Lord: *Marcion* uses
“ that according to St. *Luke*, which he mu-
“ tilates; but, however, what he retains of
“ it is sufficient to shew that he blasphemes
“ against the only true God. Those who
“ divide *Jesus* from the *Christ*, and say that
“ *Jesus* suffered, but that the *Christ* is im-
“ passible (or cannot suffer) prefer the Go-
“ spel according to St. *Mark*; and if they do
“ read it in the Love of Truth, they may be
“ reclaimed from that Error. And the *Va-*
“ *lentinians* receive that of St. *John*, which
“ they preserve entire, in order to prove
“ their *Conjugations*; but they are thereby
“ shewn to have no right Notions of
“ Things, as I have made it appear in my
“ first Book. And therefore when our Ad-
“ versaries testify in our Favour, and make
“ use of those very Gospels, the Proof of
“ their Authenticness is plain and unquesti-
“ onable, and it follows that there are nei-
“ ther more nor less than these.” And in-
deed the Fragments we have of the Books
of these Heretics, or the Passages quoted from
them in the Writings of the Fathers, plain-
ly shew, that this Observation of *Irenæus* is
very just. To which we may add, that the
oldest

oldest and bitterest Enemies of the *Christian* Religion, such as *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian*, never denied that the four Gospels were written by the Persons whose Names they bear; which they would undoubtedly have done, had they not been persuaded of their *Genuineness*, and that this was a Matter of Fact too generally and too firmly believed, to be contradicted.

Lastly, It is very remarkable, that many of the *Apostles* and *Apostolical* Men, and of their immediate Successors, lived to a very great Age, so that they were able the longer to bear witness to the Truth and Authority of the Gospels, or to disprove them if they had been spurious; and the Tradition concerning them was the *surer*, as it went through *fewer* Hands. *St. John* died but in the *Ninety-ninth* or *Hundredth* Year of our Lord, and as long as he lived, there was no Danger of false Gospels being palmed upon the Church as authentic: *Christians* from all Parts might apply to him for their Satisfaction in this Point, as to a living Oracle, till the *Canon* of the true Gospels was settled and received every where, which happened but a short Time before his Death^a; and this was the

^a See *Mill. Prolegom. Cleric. Harm. Evang. Dissert. III.*

more easy, as he resided best Part of his Life at *Ephesus*, a large trading Town, whose Inhabitants corresponded with all the then known World. *Clemens Romanus*, *Simeon* (*Cleophas* his Son) who was Bishop of *Jerusalem*, *Polycarp*, and *Ignatius*, were his Contemporaries, familiar Friends, or Disciples, and had even seen, at least the two first, most of the other Apostles. Now *Clemens Romanus* and *Simeon* were both put to Death in the third Persecution under *Trajan*, about the Year *CVIII*, being the first 110, and the second 120 Years old. *Ignatius*, who governed the Church of *Antioch* forty Years, suffered in the Year *CVII*; and *Polycarp*, who, according to his own Declaration on the Day that he was martyr'd, had been a *Servant of Christ eighty six Years*, in *CLXVI*. And therefore these *Apostolical Men* must have conversed with the primitive Fathers which flourished about the Middle of the second Century, such as *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Athenagoras*, *Tatian*, *Theophilus Antiochenus*, and many more who lived to the End of that Century, and even Part of the *third*, and whose Books we have, either perfect, or abridged in *Eusebius*; by which it appears that the Gospels were then universally received

ceived as authentic, and as containing a faithful History of our Saviour's Miracles and Doctrine ; so that there is but one Life between the *Apostles* and the *Christians* of the Beginning of the *third* Century. And it is further observable, that the intermediate Fathers have suffered the greatest Afflictions and Death itself, in Support of what they reported as from the Apostles. And therefore no Tradition in the World has, or can have a better Foundation than this ; and he that will still doubt of it, must believe nothing but what he has seen with his own Eyes.

As to the Place or Places wherein the four Gospels were wrote, Mr. *Chubb* seems to think it necessary that a Relation of past Facts should be published upon the very Spot where they happen, and would fain insinuate that these Books made their first Appearance in Countries so remote from the Scene of Action, that it was next to impossible to come at the Truth of the Miracles reported in them. But, by his Leave, there is no more Necessity for an Historian to write *upon the Scene*, than to write *at the Time* of Action, which I have shewn above there is not ; and the same Reasons that make it *fitter* to defer it for *some Time*, will easily prove that it is

The Places wherein the Gospels were published, can be no Objection to the Truth of the Miracles reported in them, any more than the Time of their Publication.

better in general to do it at *some Distance*. Besides, according to the constant Tradition of the Church, the first Gospel, that of St. *Matthew*, was published upon the very Spot where our Saviour lived and performed his Miracles in *Judea*, and for the use of the *Jews*; so that, in this Respect, no Objection can be made to its Authenticness. And if so, the three others must of Course be admitted as genuine, since they perfectly agree with it, at least in the main Facts. St. *Mark* is supposed to have wrote at *Rome*^a, and St. *Luke* either in the same Place, or (which is much more probable as I have already observed) at *Alexandria*, before his Journey to *Rome* with St. *Paul*^b. As to St. *John*, it can hardly be doubted, but that he published his Gospel at *Ephesus*, since he spent all the latter Part of his Life there, excepting the Time of his Banishment into the Isle of *Patmos*, during which he wrote his *Revelation*; and besides, we have the concurrent Testimony of the Fathers about it^c. Now neither *Alexandria* nor *Ephesus* were

^a *Clem. Alex. L. vi. Hypotyposeon. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. L. ii. c. 15. Hieron. in Marc.* ^b *Mill. Prolegom. Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. vi. c. 14. Mill. Proleg.*

at any great Distance from *Judea*, with which they must have had a particular Correspondence, being both large trading Cities. And though *Rome* was considerably remoter, it was easy to be informed from thence of the Truth of the miraculous Facts reported in the Gospels, by the continual Intercourse between that great *Metropolis* and the Provinces of the *Roman* Empire, and especially by means of the *Jews* settled there, who resorted yearly to *Jerusalem* to the Passover, as long as the Temple stood. And indeed, this is plainly confirmed by the Account we have of Christianity being soon known and embraced by great Numbers of People in that City, even so soon as the Beginning of *Nero's* Reign, about twenty Years after our Saviour's Ascension, and before any of the Apostles or Apostolical Men had been there, as appears by the Epistle which *St. Paul* wrote to them in the Year of our Lord LVII^d, wherein he tells them that *their Faith was then spoken of throughout the World*^e.

Let me add, that the Miracles recorded in the Gospels were not such as that no

^d See *Mill. Proleg.*

^e Rom. i. 8. see also *Tacit. Sueton.*

body had heard of them before the Publication of those Books; for they had been openly preached, or related all along by the Apostles and their Disciples, ever since the Time of their Performance, upon the very Spot wherein they were wrought, in *Jerusalem* and *Judea*, as well as in all the Neighbouring Countries, and in Places far distant. And therefore it was no difficult Matter to come at the Truth; especially if we consider farther, that these Miracles were not of a *transient* Nature, such as the Tricks of Juglers and Mountebanks, but their *Effects* remained for *some Time*, and even, in particular Cases, *long* after. Among the vast Number of People which *Christ* miraculously fed, cured, or brought to Life again, many no doubt out-lived him several Years; and as they were both well known, and much disposed to recount the wonderful Favours which they had received, it was very easy to be informed by them, or their Friends and Acquaintance, of the Truth of the Matter^a.

And

^a If what *Grotius* observes is true, that the Reason why the three first *Evangelists* have not taken the least Notice of the Resurrection of *Lazarus*, though it be such a stupendous Miracle, is because *Lazarus* was still alive when they wrote their Gospels, and they were afraid that the inserting his Case into

And that it was so in Fact, is undeniable from the Testimony of *Quadratus*, the first Apologist for the *Christian* Religion, and an immediate Disciple of the Apostles. Addressing himself to the Emperor *Adrian*, about the Year of *Christ* cxxiii, he speaks thus^b, “ The Works of our Saviour were always visible and conspicuous, for they were true, and without Artifice. They that were cured of their Diseases, and they that were raised from the Dead, were not only seen by all when they were cured and had rose again, but afterwards were always present. They not only appeared all the Time that our Saviour staid upon Earth, but they lived long after his Departure from it ; so that some of those very Persons have continued in being even till our own Times,” i.e. *till the Beginning of the second Century*, before which, not only all the Gospels, but all the Books of the

into their History would expose him to some ill Treatment from the obdurate unbelieving *Jews* : If this Observation, I say, be true (and it cannot be denied that it is extremely probable) then *Lazarus* must have lived near thirty Years after our Saviour's Ascension, which was more than sufficient to establish by his Presence in the World, the Truth of his being raised from the Dead, especially as he lived so near *Jerusalem*, and was a Man of Note that had a very large Acquaintance.

^b See *Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. iv. c. 3.*

New Testament were wrote. If so, there could be no great Difficulty in any one's satisfying himself of the Truth of the Miracles recorded in those Books; it was but enquiring of the Persons who had been the happy Objects of them, or of their Neighbours and Relations, and other Eye-Witnesses, how the Case stood; it was but comparing their Reports with the Narrations of the *Evangelists*; and this, even People at the greatest Distance might do, with a little Trouble and Care.

But, says Mr. *Chubb* c, “ Constant Experience shews how *hard* and *difficult* a Thing it is to come at the *Truth* of Facts performed but *Yesterday*, and in *the next Parish*; and this Difficulty of Course must *increase* in Proportion to the *Distance* of Time and Place the Facts may be performed in, or of their being *entered* upon *Records*, or the making of such Records *public*; and other Circumstances may intervene, which may *increase* that Difficulty. Besides, who is there that would take the *Pains* of examining into the *Truth* of a Fact performed *ten* or *twenty* Years before, and *an hundred*, or *two hundred* Miles distant from him? The *Trouble-*

c P. §1.

“ *someness*

“ *foemeness* of the Work, and the *little Likelihood* of obtaining a *rational* Satisfaction, “ are surely sufficient *Bars* to such an Undertaking.” All this is but a *Mist* of his own raising. If People will take a little Pains and Trouble to satisfy themselves in this Respect, they may easily come at the Truth ; but it is what the Generality *seldom* care to do, and therefore they are *often* at a Loss. An inquisitive Mind, a Mind well disposed and zealous for the Truth, will spare no Trouble in search of it, especially when Religion, *i. e.* his greatest Interest, is concerned in it. And indeed, to shew how impertinent Mr. *Chubb's* Observation in this Place is, let me ask, Is there any Comparison to be made between *ordinary* Events, or *common* Affairs of Life, which interest but a few People, or are transacted only before a few, and *extraordinary, miraculous* Works, supposed to be done in Confirmation of a *most important* Doctrine, a Doctrine, in short, on the Belief of which the Salvation of Mankind is said to depend ; *Works* often repeated for four Years together, openly, in all Places, and before Multitudes of People of all Ranks and Denominations ? Can there be any Difficulty in coming at the Truth of such Facts as these,

these, but what a sincere good Man may easily surmount, especially during the Life of the Eye-Witnesses? Or is the Distance of a *hundred or two hundred Miles*, and of *ten or twenty Years*, such a *Bar* to an Enquiry of that Kind, as this Author would have it? If it be, then we must believe nothing but what we have actually seen with our own Eyes; we must reject all History as fabulous and romantic, even what has happened in our own Times and our own Country; which is the most absurd and monstrous Supposition that can ever be imagined or advanced.

The primitive Christians were so far from keeping the Books of the New Testament as a secret Treasure, that they did what they could to have them dispersed all over the World.

The *last* Thing which the before-mentioned Objection supposes, or insinuates, is that the *Records* containing the Miracles of *Christ* were kept as a *secret Treasure* in the Hands of Believers; which rendered a strict and proper *Scrutiny* into the Case *exceeding difficult*, if not *impossible*. But this is equally false and malicious. Our Saviour had commanded his Disciples *to go and teach all Nations*; which could not be done by their *Preaching* only, and therefore required their *Writing* also. But of what Use would their Books have been to the Conversion of Mankind, if they had not freely and indifferent-

ly communicated them to all Sorts of People, and taken particular Care that they should be dispersed among all *Nations*? How could the Gospel have spread itself so soon as it did throughout the World, if they had made a Mystery of it by not suffering their Writings to come to the open Light? Would not Unbelievers have objected to such a Conduct, that it very much favoured of Fraud and Imposture? But was this ever done? Let Mr. *Chubb*, or any *Deist* besides, produce one single Instance of it, and I will give up the Point. Nay, it is a plain Matter of Fact, that the primitive Christians acted quite a different Part from the beginning. St. *Luke* dedicates his *Gospel*, as well as the *Acts of the Apostles*, to one *Theophilus*, who by his very Name appears to have been a *Greek* among the *Gentiles*, and by the Title of *Most Excellent* which he gives him, to be a Person in Authority, or a Magistrate (for St. *Paul* uses the same Expression in addressing himself to the Governors *Festus* and *Felix*); and he clearly intimates that he writes the History of *Christ*, not to rectify the Mistakes of those who had already published it (for he does not condemn or disapprove them) but the better to ascertain the Truth of it, and
disperse

disperse it all over the World^a. St. Paul wrote to the Romans before he had preached to them, and in order that his Epistle should be read in public as a Rule of Faith; for that this was his general Intention in writing his Epistles, may be collected from that to the Colossians, whom he had not seen as yet, wherein he says^b, *when this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that ye likewise read that from Laodicea*. This Passage plainly shews, that the Writings of the Apostles were publicly read in the Churches, and communicated or transmitted from one Church to another: And as in those public Assemblies there were certainly Unbelievers, who came either out of Curiosity, or to be instructed in the Christian Faith, it was easy for any Heathen to be informed of the Contents of those Books. The Sight of them was never denied, and they were transcribed as often as there were People willing to take that Trouble. And since the Apostles and their Disciples did openly preach the Doctrines which they contain and the Miracles reported in them, and that to Hea-

^a See Luke i. 1, 4.^b Coloss. iv. 16.

thens,

thens as well as *Christians*, to what Purpose should they have kept them from the Knowledge of the *former*? and what would the *latter* have got by it?

Moreover, that both *Jews* and *Pagans* might read those Books, if they pleased, or might be acquainted with the Purport of them, is plain from the many *Apologies* in Favour of Christianity, which were addressed to the Emperors and Senate of *Rome*, and dispersed all over the World, and in which the Substance of them was delivered, and long Passages out of them were quoted; and also from the Works of the most ancient Fathers, published at different Times, and in different Places, such as those of *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Julianus Africanus*, *Origen*, *St. Cyprian*, and especially the Harmonies of *Tatian* and *Ammonius Alexandrinus*, the last of which was very much esteemed as a just Representation of the *four Gospels*; and the *Italic* or *Latin* Version of the *New Testament*, made in the second Century, and probably under the Direction of Pope *Pius I*^a; which contributed not a little to the spread-

^a See *Mill. Proleg.*

ing of those sacred Books, and rendered the Knowledge of them more universal. Let me add, that those who were commissioned by the Apostles to go and preach the Gospel in Places and Countries where they could not go themselves, or to take upon them the Government of particular Churches, made it their Business, no doubt, to carry with them Copies of those Books, and to multiply and disperse them as much as possible : And that they actually did so we learn from *Eusebius*, who speaking of the immediate Successors of the Apostles, says ^b, that *leaving their native Countries, they discharged the Office of Evangelists, being ambitious to preach Christ, and to deliver the Books of the divine Gospels to such as HAD NEVER HEARD THE WORD OF FAITH.* Furthermore, it is evident that both *Celsus* who lived about the Middle of the *second* Century, and *Porphyry* who lived in the *third*, had those Books in their Hands, since they not only wrote against them, but even pretended to understand them thoroughly ; and yet they never complained of any Difficulty they had in getting them, or of the Conduct of Christians in this respect.

^b *Hist. Eccles. Lib. iii. c. 37.*

How then can Mr. *Chubb* suppose (for by the Drift of his Reasoning he does suppose it, as I have already observed) that our sacred Records were kept so secret, that the Heathens could not possibly come at them? But in this he follows his great Hero *Tindal*, who in his *Dissertation concerning the canonical Authority of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, &c.* did roundly assert as a Matter of Fact what Mr. *Chubb* only insinuates here: And though that Author was fully confuted in this, as in all other respects^a, yet will this Man make use of the same Calumny, because it serves his present Purpose, as if he did not know that it has no other Foundation but what happened in the *third* Century, under the Persecution of *Diocletian*, who made an Edict that all *Christians* should deliver up their sacred Books, to be burnt by the Hangman, and whoever should refuse to do it should be put to Death; which obliged them to hide their Bibles carefully, and those that proved weak enough to deliver them, were by the Church looked upon as Apostates,

^a See *A Vindication of the Bishop of London's third Pastoral Letter*, (wherein the Authenticness of the four Gospels is in very few Words, and very clearly made out) in *Answer to a late Pamphlet*, intitled, *A Dissertation, &c.* which Vindication was wrote by the late learned Dr. *Twells*.

called *Traditores*, Traitors, or Betrayers of the Oracles of God, and forced to do Penance in order to be admitted again into its Communion. But what has all this to do with our Author's malicious Insinuation, that the primitive Christians made a Mystery of their Religion, and were afraid lest the Imposture of it should come to Light, by their shewing or giving Copies of the Books of the *New Testament*?

Let us now proceed to the Examination of another very material Passage in Mr. Chubb's *Discourse*, wherein he has given us a new *Specimen* both of his Dishonesty and Infidelity: "Though," says he^b, "the *Circumstances* that attend Miracles ought in *some Measure* to be our Guide" (they ought to be so, not only in *some Measure*, but *absolutely* and in *all respects*; since it is only by *Circumstances* that we can judge of their Nature, Truth, and Reality) "yet, alas! Experience shews, that the very same *Circumstances*, at least they are the same for any thing that appears to the contrary, at different Times, and to different Persons, do not become a like Foundation for Credit, or the contrary, with respect to them."

^b P. 82, 83.

But

But how does he prove this Assertion, which, if it were true, would at once overthrow all the Evidence we can have of Miracles? Why truly, by a *Story*, which he himself believes nothing of, and is indeed one of the most stupid Things that ever was published, *viz.* the Relation of a pretended Miracle done in 1703 among the *Camisards* ^c, printed in London in 1707. For having given it Word for Word, and expatiated upon it to shew that it has all the Circumstances required in a true Miracle, he concludes by asking, *Who is there that thinks he has proper and sufficient Ground to justify his giving Credit to this Fact, supposing it has, or should come within his Notice?* To which he adds immediately in his usual *sceptical* Way, *or that can shew sufficient Reason why he should not?* And I think, continues he with a Sneer, *it may be answered, perhaps not one in ten, amidst the Multitude of Believers that are now in the*

^c Thus the *French* called in Derision the poor Protestants of the *Cevennes* in the South of *France*, who in *Queen Anne's* Time took up Arms to defend themselves against the most cruel Oppressions and Persecutions of *Lewis XIV.* who sent an Army of *twenty thousand* Men to reduce them, and not being able to effect it, was forced at last to make a Treaty with them, by Virtue of which their Troops, amounting to no more than *seven or eight hundred* Men, had Liberty allowed them to go out of the Kingdom with their Arms, Ammunition, and Baggage.

World^d. But why not one Christian in ten can satisfy himself of the Truth of this Relation? Is it because Christians are all *Fools*? Indeed with him, it seems a *Believer*, and a credulous enthusiastic Person is much the same; and no doubt it must be so, since he has too much Wit to be one himself. Or is it because it is too difficult to come at the Truth in this Respect? If that be his Meaning, as it must be to justify his odious Parallel between the two Cases, I will shew him that nothing is more easy, even at this Distance of Time and Place, than to satisfy one's-self of the Falsity of this pretended Miracle.

The Miracle said to have been done among the Cevennois, in 1703, and alledged by Mr. Chubb as an Instance that ought to render all Miracles in general dubious, proved to be a mere Forgery.

The Story, in short, runs thus; one *Clarry*, a Bricklayer by Trade, who pretended to extraordinary Visions and Revelations, and took upon himself the Office of a *Preacher* among the *Cevennois*, fell one Day into a Kind of Extasy, with very violent Agitations, and said that God revealed to him that there were in their Assembly two Traitors, or Spies, sent by their Enemies, to be informed of what passed among them, and shewed him who they were: And immediately he walked towards one of the Fellows and

^d P. 39.

seized

seized him; upon which the other came voluntarily, and both confessed the Fact and threw themselves at the Feet of Mr. Cavalier, the Leader of the *Cevennois*, who ordered them to be bound. But many of the Audience murmuring at it, as if the Readiness and Freedom wherewith the accused Persons had owned themselves guilty, were a Sign of an Understanding between *Clary* and them, in order to counterfeit a Miracle; *Clary* cried out, as by a sudden Inspiration, *O People of little Faith, do ye still doubt of my Power among you, when I have made you see so many Wonders of it? I command a Fire immediately to be made, and I say to thee, my Child, I will that thou put thyself in the Middle of the Flames, and they shall have no Power to hurt thee, &c.* At these Words, Mr. Cavalier ordered a Pile of Brush-wood, and dry combustible Stuff, which was at hand, to be made in the Midst of the Congregation, and *Clary* got upon it, spoke in the Flames, and continued there for at least a quarter of an Hour, till the Wood was quite burnt, without being hurt in the least, the Fire having not so much as singed his Clothes, or Hair. Upon which all the Assembly cried out, *Miracle! Miracle! And*

public Praises were offered up to God for so great a Wonder performed for the strengthening of their Faith.

Now there are several Things in this very Relation, which render it justly suspicious, and shew clearly enough, that there was no Miracle in the Case. It is said, that this *Clary's frequent Revelations, with those of Mr. Cavalier the Leader, were the ordinary Directions of their Troops.* These frequent Revelation have very much the Appearance of private *Deliberations and Resolutions* in the Military Way, and nothing more; and what puts it out of all doubt that they were really so, is that this *Mr. Cavalier*, who was afterwards a Colonel in the *English Service*, and not many Years since made a Brigadier, and Deputy-Governor of *Jersey* in which Post he died lately, and who published, about *thirty Years* ago in *London, Memoirs* of his own Life and of the Affair of the *Cevennois*, never said any thing, either in Public or in Private, of any such *Revelations*. And therefore what the Relator here says about it must be false, it being incredible that, if it were true, *Mr. Cavalier* would have passed it over in Silence, or made a Secret of it. Moreover, the *Murmuring* of many of the Assembly wherein

wherein this Fact was transacted, very much increases the Suspicion of a Fraud ; for why should they have complained, if there had been no Appearance of a Combination to impose upon them ? The Discovery, and seizing of the two Spies, who might have occasioned their Destruction, must naturally have been very agreeable to them. But indeed the Cheat was too glaring ; is it at all probable that Spies, who know they must be hanged if they are discovered, would so readily, and of their own Accord confess their Crime ? No ! unless you suppose that they were constrained to it by a miraculous Impulse ; but this is multiplying Miracles without Necessity, which can never be attributed to God. It was enough that he discovered them to *Clary*, for in so numerous a Congregation they could not possibly escape ; and the Relator himself says, that Mr. *Cavalier* had no sooner seen what *Clary* was about, *but he commanded the Soldiery to their Arms, and to surround the Assembly, so that no one might escape.*

Again, we are told that at hearing the pretended Revelation of *Clary*, ordering a Fire to be made, and that he should put him-

self in the Midst of it, *there was a Shriek among the People, of those especially who had murmured, and who having not served in Arms, had not so much Faith as we.* Observe these last Words, and see whether you can make any thing of them, if you take them in their natural or literal Meaning. Have *Soldiers* a greater Faith than the rest of *Christians*? Or must *Christians* serve in Arms, to attain to a higher Degree of Faith? Ridiculous! And therefore *Faith* can mean nothing here but *Courage*. Soldiers are naturally more courageous than those that have not been in the Service, or than Women, of which there was no doubt a great Number in such an Assembly; and therefore it is not surprizing if Part of those that were present did *shriek*, or were frightened at the Thoughts of a Man going to put himself in the Midst of a Fire, which the Soldiery were not. Besides, supposing a Fraud in the Case, none but the Soldiers, and even probably few besides their Chiefs, could be acquainted with the Scheme; and no doubt that is what he means by the Word *WE*, *who having not served in Arms, had not so much Faith as WE.* Observe further. that the Preter *tradicts* himself

himself in many Particulars. He owns that he could not hear what *Clary* spoke while he was in the Flames; and two Lines after he says, that he was very near him; and as the whole was a Miracle, one would expect that what he spoke was heard by all the Spectators. He declares that *Clary* put himself on the Top of the Pile of Wood, straight upright, with his Hands joined and lifted above his Head; and by and by he tells you that he heard from other People that he set Fire to it himself; which I am sure he could never do in the Posture he is represented. He says that the Wife of *Clary* stood by with her Father and two Sisters, and several of *Clary's* own Kindred, though he cannot be positive to their Names; but how could he be certain that there were such People, if he did not know their Names? In short, upon the very Face of this Story, it is easy to judge that there is no Truth in it; and indeed the particular Circumstance of the two Spies being immediately set at Liberty, which concludes it, is to me a plain Indication of a fraudulent Agreement or Contrivance: For as it was contrary to all the Rules of good Policy to trust to their Word and seeming Repentance

ance, so is it quite improbable that the Leaders would let them go so easily, and without taking the least Security for their future Behaviour.

But whence has Mr. *Chubb* this Story, and what is the Character of the Relator? It is taken from Mr. *Lacy's* Book, published in 1707, entitled, *A Cry from the Desert; or Testimonials of the miraculous Things lately come to pass in the Cevennes, verified upon Oath, and by other Proofs.* Now this Mr. *Lacy* was a very weak Man, addicted to *Enthusiasm*, as appears by the Character he bore in the World, by his joining with the *French Prophets* when they came over to *England*, and indeed by his very Book; for whoever will take the Trouble to read it, will discover throughout such a Credulity and visionary Turn of Mind, as is utterly inconsistent with a sound Judgment, the chief Qualification of a good Historian. Perhaps Mr. *Chubb* will say, that this is no Objection to his Honesty which was never questioned, and that all he did was to relate or transcribe the Deposition of an Eye-witness, given upon Oath. To which I answer, that he did something more, for as he was a *Justice of Peace*, the *Affida-*
vit

vit was made before him, and probably at his Desire and Instigation, which looks very much like a Contrivance. But however this be, let us enquire into the Character of the *Deponent* himself, which is more to the Purpose. His Name is *John Cavalier*, who was a Cousin of Colonel *Cavalier*, the Leader of the *Cevennois*, and an Eye-witness of the Fact. But when he joined their Troop, he had so bad a Name, the Name of an idle, debauched, pilfering young Fellow, that his own Cousin was at first against admitting him; and afterwards he behaved so ill amongst them, that he was several Times publicly reprimanded, and at last ignominiously expelled. His Conduct was not much better here in *England*, for he gave into all the Extravagancies of the *French Prophets*, and was ready at all Turns to serve their Interest, and to impose upon the Weak and the Credulous, in hopes of getting Money without any Trouble, to spend it afterwards in a riotous Manner. And no sooner did he find himself deceived, and his Party dwindling away, but he left *London* and went to *Paris*, where he turned *Papist* and enlisted in the *French King's Guards*, and there he was still living not many Years ago. This

Account

Account I have from Mr. *Mairargues*, who is himself a *Cevennois*, bore Arms in the before-mentioned Affair all along, served afterwards in Colonel *Cavalier's* Regiment, and is now a Half-pay Captain in the *English* Service : A Gentleman of an unexceptionable Character, who lives at *Hoxton* near *Moorfields*, and will, if required, make his *Affidavit* of it, having given me Leave to acquaint the Public with the same. Moreover he has assured me, that he never saw any such Transaction as is here related by Mr. *Chubb* from Mr. *Lacy's* Book, nor any Miracle at all among the *Cevennois*; that indeed they used to light Fires in the Night, both to warm themselves, and to serve as Signals or Beacons to their People ; and that once *Clary*, in order to persuade his Countrymen that he was truly inspired, said he would stand on a Pile of Wood set on Fire, till it was consumed, without receiving any Hurt ; but that, instead of putting himself upon it, he only jump'd over it, or run swiftly round it, by which he might appear to be in the Midst of the Flames, it being but a small Pile of Brush-Wood and Twigs of Vines ; and in doing this he even singed his Hair, as he ventured too near, and carried the Joke too far.

far. A fine Miracle indeed! and worthy being made a Parallel with the Miracles of the Gospel.

But this Gentleman's Declaration is further confirmed by a Letter which I received some Years ago from the Reverend Mr. *Durand*, one of the Ministers of the united *French* Chapels in *Spring-Garden*, *Hog-Lane Soko*, and *St. Martin's-Lane Cannon-Street*, *London*; the Substance of which is as follows:

" *Reverend SIR,*

" **Y**OU desire me to tell you ingenu-
" ously what I may have heard of
" certain pretended Miracles done in the
" *Cevennes*, during the *four* or *five* first Years
" of this present *Century*, and you suppose
" that having been Chaplain of a Regiment
" partly composed of *Camisards*, of which
" the late famous Brigadier-Major *Cavalier*,
" their Countryman and Leader, was Colo-
" nel, I have been able to come at the
" Truth of the Matter. I therefore here
" send you all the Particulars I can at this
" Distance of Time recollect about it. It
" is true that whilst this Regiment was rai-
" sing in *Holland*, and before their Depar-
" ture for *Spain*, where they served in the
" War

“ War against *Philip V.* there was some
 “ Talk of *certain* Miracles, said to have been
 “ performed in the *Cevennes* : But Men of
 “ Sense and Judgment laughed at those Re-
 “ ports, the common People did not know
 “ what to make of them, or rather seemed
 “ inclined to believe them, and those that
 “ were in the Government winked at this
 “ Kind of *Enthusiasm* (for I really think
 “ they were more owing to *Enthusiasm*, than
 “ to any *Design* or *Contrivance* in the *Ce-*
 “ *vennois*) in Hopes that it would produce
 “ Wonders when they should come to an
 “ Action. Though I was but young, I
 “ looked upon this as a criminal Diffimula-
 “ tion, as something base in itself, and of a
 “ very pernicious Consequence to Religion;
 “ and as soon as I was admitted into the
 “ Regiment, which was in 1706, I made
 “ it my Business to enquire into the Truth.
 “ Many of the *Cevennois* Officers belonging
 “ to it owned to me very frankly, that *they*
 “ *had never seen any Miracle*; and among
 “ the rest, Ensign *Roland*, whose Brother
 “ was one of their Chiefs, and had been
 “ taken and executed by the *French* but the
 “ Year before, declared to me one Day be-
 “ fore several other Officers, that *he never*
 “ *saw*

“ *saw any such Thing as what was reported.*
“ To which an old Lieutenant added, that
“ the *Cevennes* being a mountainous and a
“ pretty cold Country, they used to light
“ Fires to warm themselves, and that some
“ of their People would now and then run
“ through the Flames, or jump in the midst
“ of them unhurt; but that it was no Won-
“ der, since these Fires were only made
“ with dry Twigs of Vines, which would
“ burn like Straw, and the Persons who
“ would venture through them, either out of
“ Frolic, or to make the Credulous among
“ them believe that they were honoured
“ with particular Revelations, would take
“ Care to do it with great Swiftneſs, or
“ when the Wood was almoſt conſumed.
“ And even a Serjeant, who was one of
“ the greateſt *Fanatics* in the whole Regi-
“ ment, confeſſed that there was nothing in
“ thoſe Reports of Miracles that went a-
“ bout; but only inſiſted upon pretended
“ *Revelations*, which he ſaid were common
“ among them: And to ſhew you the Ge-
“ nius of theſe poor People, he told me, in
“ order to convince me of the Reality of
“ ſuch Revelations, that I was myſelf fa-
“ voured with the like Gifts; *for*, ſaid he,
“ *do*

“ do not you declare unto us the Will of God?

“ Ex ungue Leonem.

“ Upon this I wrote to Mr. *La Rivière*,
 “ then Minister at *Rotterdam*, to acquaint
 “ him with the Truth of the Matter, and
 “ desire him to shew my Letter to every
 “ Body, that these who were either in-
 “ clined to believe those Reports, or dubi-
 “ ous about them, might be effectually un-
 “ deceived or satisfied; which he did so suc-
 “ cessfully that I believe there is not at this
 “ Time in *Holland* one single Person, among
 “ all those who ever heard of them, that
 “ believes any thing about them. This Gen-
 “ tleman is still alive, and one of the most
 “ considerable Ministers at *Amsterdam*^a,
 “ and may be applied to for the Confirma-
 “ tion of what I here solemnly declare as
 “ Matter of Fact.

“ I must further tell you, that neither
 “ Colonel *Cavalier*, lately deceased, nor his
 “ eldest Brother who was a Captain in his
 “ Regiment, nor his youngest who was an
 “ Ensign, ever mentioned a Word to me of

^a He is since dead, but many People in *Holland* remember the Affair perfectly well; and Mr. *Durand* is living, who will, if required, give all the Satisfaction that can be desired in this Respect.

“ these

“ these pretended Miracles; no not even
“ since the Regiment was broke, though I
“ always lived very friendly with them, and
“ was much in their Confidence, &c. I
“ am,

Reverend SIR,

London, April 27,
1741.

Yours, &c.

DAVID DURAND.”

Here it will not be amiss to acquaint the Reader, that about *twenty* Years ago, Colonel *Cavalier* published some *Memoirs* of his Life, and of the Affairs of the *Cevennois*; and though I have not been able to come at them by reason of their Scarcity (there having been but one Edition of them, which has been long since sold) yet several Gentlemen who read them about the Time of their Publication, have assured me that there is not the least Mention made of this pretended Miracle, nor even of any Miracle at all ever performed in the *Cevennes*. The Author indeed speaks often of *miraculous* Preservations and Deliverances, wrought in favour of those poor persecuted *Protestants*; but this is a common religious Way of speaking, and nothing to the present Purpose. I wonder that Mr. *Chubb*, who could search the Butter-Shops, or the Stalls

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in *Moorfields* for Mr. *Lacy's* Book, (for no where else is it to be met with, as I have found by Experience) could not also find Means to get these *Memoirs*, which would soon have undeceived him, and prevented the Disgrace, which such a silly, impertinent, and visibly forged Story cannot fail to bring upon his Judgment. But any thing will serve the Turn of a Man strongly prejudic'd against *Christianity*; and what might at once set him right, he has little Inclination to enquire into.

Furthermore, there is now in the Hands of the Bishop of *Oxford*, a Declaration in Writing concerning this pretended Miracle, which his *Lordship* has been so good as to communicate to me. The Author is Mr. *Serres*, one of the worthy *Confessors* deliver'd by the *Intercession* of the late Queen *CAROLINE*, from the cruellest Captivity that can be imagined on board the Gallies at *Marseilles*, who lives now at *Winchester*. He says that while he was under that Captivity, one *Donnadieu*, a *Cevennois* that had been taken Prisoner, and pretended also to extraordinary Gifts and Revelations, was brought on board the Galley he was in, and put in Irons in a Place just by him; that this Man
soon

soon fell sick, and that being near his End, he (*Serres*) went to him, and after some brotherly Exhortations, he adjured him to give Glory to God, and to declare the Truth in relation to the *Miracle* said to have been done by *Clary* in the *Cevennes*, which had made such a Noise among the *Protestants*. Upon this, *Donnadieu* burst into Tears, and told him, that it was all a Cheat contrived by the Privy-Council of the *Camisards*, of which he was a Member, to revive the Courage of their Troops, who seemed quite dispirited and ready to lay down their Arms; and that in order to prevent its being detected, they, together with their most trusty Soldiers, surrounded the Spot of Ground where the Fire was made, and kept all the rest of the Assembly behind at a Distance, who therefore could not see what was doing, and so strongly believed that *Clary* had been all the while in the Flames, that when the Farce was over, many of them run to him with Admiration, and examined his Clothes thinking they should have a Smell of Fire and Smoke. One *Brieffe*, a *Cevennois*, who by this Relation appears to have been also in the Secret, and was then with *Donnadieu*, confirmed his Deposition, and add-

ed moreover that *Clary* was not so simple as to put himself into the Fire, for that he would surely have been burnt.

The Reverend Mr. *Laval*, one of the Ministers of the *French* Chapels in *Berwick-street* and *Castle-street*, who lately published in *English* a very faithful History of the *Protestant* Churches in *France* since the *Reformation*, having often had an Opportunity of conversing with the said Mr. *Serres*, sent me likewise some Time ago at my Request an Account of what he had heard from him concerning this Affair, which Account exactly agrees with the foregoing Declaration, except that it is a little more particular as to the Manner in which the Fraud was conducted. For it thereby appears, that two Ranks of trusty Friends and Soldiers were set round the Pile of Wood to keep off the People, and chiefly those that here, as well as in the Relation made use of by Mr. *Chubb*, are called *Murmurers*, i. e. in plain *English*, those who having too much Judgment and Penetration to be imposed upon, saw full well thro' the Plot. *Clary*, after having stood for some Time on the Top of the Pile, in the Posture that has been represented, to shew himself to the Spectators, dextrously slid down the

the Moment it was going to be lighted, and run swiftly round the Fire, now and then kicking the Sticks to raise the Flames, as if he had been in the Midst of them: And as soon as the Wood was consumed, he stood upon the Cinders, the Circle opening to let the People have a full View of him, and the Cry was *Miracle! Miracle!* I must add, that Mr. *Laval* does not seem to think so favourably of this Affair as Mr. *Durand* does, who attributes it rather to *Fanaticism* than *Knavery*; for he looks upon it as a mere Fraud, contrived and carried on by a Cabal, in order to promote their temporal Welfare, at the Expence of their own Religion, which strongly forbids the use of all such indirect Means. And indeed all the *French* Ministers that I ever was acquainted with, have much the same Opinion of this Transaction, and highly condemn it, being very far from encouraging *Enthusiasm*, or having the least Propensity to it.

Now let the impartial Reader judge, whether Mr. *Chubb* has acted the Part of a fair Inquirer after Truth, in bringing in this Instance to shew that a particular Fact, represented as *Miraculous*, may be attended with all the

Circumstances requisite in a *Miracle*, and yet be *no Miracle at all*, or at least a very *uncertain* one; which, if true, would at once destroy *all the Evidence* we can *possibly* have in this respect, as has been already observed, And indeed a Man must be wilfully blind, who does not see that his only View in opposing this pretended *Miracle* of the *French Prophets* to the *Miracles* of the *Gospel*, or putting the *latter* upon the same Foot with the *former*, is to bring them all under the same Discredit. For this Reason, and because I have heard that many good Christians, even learned Men and Persons of Note, were startled at this *Story*, or at the Parallel founded thereon, and knew not how to confute it; I thought it incumbent upon me to enter into a particular Examination of it, and give them all the Information they could possibly desire.

That Mr. Chubb very unfairly attacks the Author of the Trial of the Witnesses, for not having produced the Testi-

There is another Thing in Mr. *Chubb's Discourse*, &c. which I cannot pass over unobserved. Amongst all the learned Productions that have appeared of late in Defence of Christianity, none has met with a more general Applause than *the Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus*, &c. and therefore Mr. *Chubb* must needs attack it; though

though I believe the true Reason of his doing so, is a secret Resentment of what *the very great Man*, who is the Author of it, *was pleased to say of him, that he was come to personal Reflections with Respect to Dr. Stebbing*, (who had published a Charge to the Clergy of *Wilts* against his true Gospel, &c.) and this was given as a Reason why the Doctor would have no more to say upon the Subject ^a. For he could not bear that the Bishop of *Salisbury* (whom he means by that very great Man) should talk so of him, and be the Cause that he could not go on wrangling with Dr. Stebbing; besides, he is the Doctor's great Friend and Benefactor ^b, and consequently no better than himself. Hence all his Virulence against the Trial of the Witnesses, &c. though indeed what he here says in his own Justification, shews but too plainly, that the Bishop had reason to accuse him of *personal Reflections*, and to advise the Doctor upon this Account to drop the Dispute.

I should not take upon me to vindicate that celebrated Piece against Mr. Chubb's unfair Representations and frivolous Objections,

^a Disc. p. 100.

^b Ibid. p. 102.

was it not that some of these Objections have a plausible Appearance, and the answering of them naturally belongs to my general Design : For I am fully persuaded, that neither this Author, nor all the Deists in the World can detract any thing from that universal Esteem and Approbation which it has been so long in Possession of. He finds Fault with the Bishop for his not having produced the Testimony of the Witnesses of our Saviour's Resurrection in their own Words, and this he very civilly calls *foul practising*, as if that Prelate had had a Mind to impose upon the Readers, by *speaking the Witnesses Sense in his own Words*, or giving his *Comment* upon it^c. But had this Objector read *the Trial*, &c. with Care, or without Prejudice, he would have seen that in this Controversy the Evidence, or the Testimony of the Witnesses was admitted on both Sides, so that there was no occasion to quote their very Words. *Woolston* had not gone so far as to deny that *Matthew*, *Mark*, &c. had witnessed in favour of our Lord's Resurrection ; he only made Objections against their Testimony, in order to invalidate it ; and there-

^c *Disc.* p. 93, 94.

fore the Bishop had nothing more to do than to answer these Objections, and at first setting out he explains himself so clearly about it, that it is a Wonder to me how Mr. Chubb could so grossly mistake him. *The Evidence*, says he, *is matter of Record, and I have been long in Possession of all that I claim under it. If the Gentleman has any thing to say to dispossess me, let him produce it; otherwise I have no Reason to bring my own Title into Question*^a. And again^c, the Judge replies, Sir, you say right, upon Supposition that the Truth of the Christian Religion were the point in Judgment: In that Case, it would be necessary to produce the Evidence for the Christian Religion; but the Matter now before the Court is, Whether the Objections produced by Mr. Woolston are of Weight to overthrow the Evidence of Christ's Resurrection. You see then the Evidence of the Resurrection is supposed to be what it is on both Sides, and the Thing immediately in Judgment, is the Value of the Objections, &c.

Indeed, was the Testimony of the Apostles quite a new Thing, or a Thing hardly heard of before, or difficult to come at, Mr. Chubb's Objection would be well grounded;

^a *Trial of the Witnesses, &c.* p. 7.

^c P. 8.

but

but when it has been properly recorded for above *sixteen hundred Years*, and these Records are actually in the Hands of every Body; what need was there to repeat it here? How could the Bishop impose upon his Readers by not repeating it? And if he has *commented* upon it, can this be called *foul practising*? If it can, then all Judges are guilty of such a Conduct, since in their *Instructions* or *Directions* to the *Jury*, they explain the Nature, reflect upon the Circumstances, and shew the Strength of the Evidence given in. And as the *Jury* may nevertheless judge for themselves, and determine accordingly, so is the World at Liberty to approve or reject the Bishop's *Comment*; so was Mr. *Chubb*, who should, if he found it wrong in any respect, have clearly made it out, instead of contenting himself with malicious Insinuations and Aspersions, which I am sure is not very *fair practising*. But the Truth is, he only wanted to find Fault, and to have an Opportunity of bringing into Question the Evidence of our Saviour's Resurrection; for to what other Purpose does he introduce *Simon, Andrew, and Philip*, as Witnesses whose *Words should be produced*^a, when he

^a P. 93.

knows

knows very well that the two latter have left us no Writings, and consequently no Testimony in *express Words*? One would think he imagines that unless the Deposition of every one of the Apostles can be produced in their own Words, the Proof taken from this Topic is of no Signification; or that those who make use of it take it for granted that we have such a particular distinct Testimony; But all that we say, and is sufficient to determine a reasonable Man in this Case, is, that *Matthew* and *John* have given a particular Account of our Saviour's Miracles and Resurrection, as having been Eye-Witnesses of them, together with the rest of the Apostles; that in their Epistles, these Facts are all along either expressly mentioned, or supposed and taken for granted; that *Mark* and *Luke*, their immediate Disciples and Companions, relate, as from them^b, the very same Things and with the same Circumstances; and that St. *Luke* in particular, who published their *Acts*, and lived with them near *thirty* Years, has left us many of their Discourses in their own Words, wherein they give a full Testimony to the Truth of those Miracles.

^b See before, p. 392, 393.

Thus

*That this
Testimony
is clear,
positive,
and full;
and more
than suffi-
cient to sa-
tisfy any
reasonable
Man.*

Thus then the Case stands; we have the express *Depositions* of at least *four* of the Apostles, *Matthew* and *John* throughout their Gospels (for if they are truly the Authors of them, as has been proved above, they had seen and heard what they relate) and *John* speaking of himself at the Close of his own Gospel, expressly says^b, *This is the Disciple, which testifies of these Things, and wrote these Things, and we know that his Testimony is true*: Likewise in his first *Epistle*, ch. i. 1, 3. *That which was from the Beginning which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled of the Word of Life—declare we to you.* *Peter's* Testimony is no less positive and full, not only in the *Acts of the Apostles*, as we shall see presently, but in his own *Epistles*. He begins his *first* with these Words, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant Mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively Hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead*^c. He makes frequent Mention of that

^b John xxi. 24. As to the Objection that these Words were not wrote by St. *John* himself, see Dr. *Whitby* upon the Place.

^c c. i. 3.

wonderful

wonderful Event, and the glorious Consequences of it, as of an unquestionable Matter of Fact; and he solemnly declares^a, *We have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known to you the Power and Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were Eye-Witnesses of his Majesty*, i. e. of the divine, Miracle-working Power, which resided in him, and in particular of the Glory of his *Transfiguration*, and of the Testimony which was given him by a Voice from Heaven. The *fourth* Witness we have in this Case, is *Paul*; for though it is nowhere said that he had seen our Saviour *in the Flesh*, and been an Eye-witness of his Miracles, yet the thing is not improbable, if we consider that he was brought up at the Feet of *Gamaliel* in *Jerusalem*, and converted to the Gospel not two Years after the Death of *Christ*. But be that as it will, certain it is that he saw him in Person upon the Road to *Damascus*, and was by him both commissioned and qualified to publish his Doctrine and Miracles; and if so, he is as good a Witness of them as the other Apostles^b. Now he not only speaks often

^a 2 Peter i. 16. ^b See upon this Subject an ingenious Piece lately published, intitled, *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul.*

of these Wonders, as a Man thoroughly persuaded of their Reality, but has a whole Chapter to prove our Lord's Resurrection, and draw from it by a very just Inference the Truth of our own. *I delivered to you first of all*, says he to the Corinthians (1 Ep. ch. xv. 3, &c.) *that which I also received* (by Revelation) *how that Christ died for our Sins according to the Scripture; and that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the Twelve: After that he was seen of above five hundred Brethren at once, of whom the greater Part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James, then of all the Apostles; and last of all, HE WAS SEEN OF ME ALSO, &c.* Can any thing be more express? And what will satisfy Mr. Chubb, or any Deist in this respect, if such a Testimony of *four* Apostles, delivered in their own Words, is not able to do it?

But to these *four*, join James and Jude, whose *Epistles* evidently suppose the Truth of the miraculous Facts recorded in the Gospels, and instead of *two or three Witnesses*, usually required in Civil Affairs for the Proof of any Fact, you will have *six*, equally competent

petent and unexceptionable. Observe further, that in truth *all* the Apostles have unanimously deposed in this Case by the Mouth of *Peter* their Head or President, as he appears to have been, both by the Promise of *Christ* to him^a, and by the History of the *Acts*. When the Election of a *twelfth* Apostle, in the room of *Judas*, came on, it is remarked that *Peter* stood up in the midst of the Disciples and said, *Men and Brethren—wherefore of these Men that have accompanied with us all the Time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the Baptism of John unto that same Day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained TO BE WITNESS WITH US OF HIS RESURRECTION.* And on the Day of *Pentecost*, *Peter* standing up with the *Eleven*, in the Midst of that great Multitude of *Jews* and *Profelytes* of all Nations, who were come to the Feast, lift up his Voice and said to them,—*Ye Men of Israel hear these Words, Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God, among you, by Miracles, and Wonders, and Signs, (observe this Accumulation of Words, which has a great Meaning, and imports something very stupendous, the most extraordinary and mighty Works) which*

^a Matth. xvi, 17, &c.

God did by him in the Midst of you, as ye yourselves also know : Him — God hath raised up, whereof WE ARE ALL WITNESSES^b. Here you see St. Peter speaks in the Name of all the Apostles then present, none of which contradicted him ; so that what he *deposes* in this Matter ought to be looked upon as the *joint Testimony* of them all. Let me add, that they all underwent many Calamities and Persecutions, and most of them Death itself, in Confirmation of this their *constant* and *uniform* Testimony ; which gives no small Weight to it, as is fully made out in *the Trial of the Witnesses*, &c.^c where the Reader will find this particular Argument handled in a masterly Manner, and cleared from all Objections.

But it is not enough, it seems, to have the Testimony of the Witnesses in their own Words ; except they be *plain*, and *clear*, and *express*, and *full*, and *perfectly* agree, they are not to be admitted^d. Be it so ! what does Mr. Chubb infer from hence ? Why, “ That it will not be of much Use to “ enquire whether *Simon*, and *Andrew*, and “ *Philip*, were *well qualified* to know the

^b Acts ii. 14, 22, 24, 32. See also v. 30, 32. x. 40, 41. ^c P. 108, &c. ^d *Discourse on Miracles*, p. 94.

“ particular

“ particular Facts of *Christ's* Resurrection ; or
 “ whether we have just Ground for presum-
 “ ing that they would *testify* the Truth of
 “ what they knew concerning it ; when ei-
 “ ther they have not given *any Testimonies*
 “ concerning that Fact, or when such Tes-
 “ timonies are *not produced*, or when the
 “ Testimonies produced are not *in the Words*
 “ of the Witnesses themselves, or when those
 “ Testimonies *disagree* in Circumstances that
 “ are material, or when those Witnesses have
 “ expressed themselves *weakly*, or *darkly*, or
 “ *doubtfully* upon the Question^a.” Is not
 this insinuating, according to Mr. *Chubb's*
 usual Candour, that the Case before us is
 or may be so ? But I hope I have now fully
 shewn, that *Simon* has given a Testimony,
 and a plain and positive one ; and that *An-*
drew and *Philip*, and the rest of the Apostles,
 whose *Words* indeed we have not in this Case,
 have nevertheless witnessed by *his* Mouth, or
 by what we know of their Behaviour and
 Sufferings upon this Account, as much as if
 they had spoke, or recorded their Declarati-
 ons. It is but reading this joint Testimony,
 such as I have produced it, and the particu-
 lar Accounts they have left us of *Christ's*

^a *Ibid.* 94, 95.

Resurrection, to be convinced that they have not *expressed themselves weakly, nor darkly, nor doubtfully upon the Question.* And as to any *Disagreement* in their Depositions or Relations, it is easy to shew that there is none that may be called *real* or *material*, and even to reconcile all the *seeming* Diversities or Contrarieties which are observed in them, so as to make them *perfectly agree.* I shall not here enter into this Argument, which is a little foreign to my Purpose and would take up too much Room, but shall refer the Reader to two late Performances, wherein he will meet with full and satisfactory Solutions of all the Difficulties that may occur in this Matter ^a.

Miracles stand upon as good a foot of Credibility as any other Fact related in History.

If it be urged, (as it is by Christians with very just Reason) that Miracles stand upon as good a foot of Credibility, as any other Facts, of which public Histories are composed; Mr. Chubb answers^b, "That this may be the Case in *some Instances*, that is, " where the Circumstances are alike; but in " *other Instances*, where the Circumstances are " not alike, it may be quite otherwise. The

^a See the Evidence of the Resurrection, &c. in Answer to the *Moral Philosopher*; and Observations on the History and Evidence of the Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, by Mr. West.

^b Discourse, &c. p. 96.

" Credibi-

“ Credibility of Facts may be *greater*, or
“ *less*, from the different Circumstances that
“ attend them, as I have already observed ;
“ and *different* Facts may have *different*
“ Foundations for Credit, though related
“ in the same History.” This Answer be-
trays clearly enough the Author’s Emba-
rassment, and that he was put to his last
Shift : He cannot deny but that the before-
mentioned Assertion is well-grounded, and yet
he will not allow it to be so *absolutely* and
in all Cases. He durst not reject as fabulous
all the Miracles of the Gospel, but neither
is he willing to admit them *all*. And there-
fore he contrives this very odd Distinction,
that in *some Instances* they stand upon as good
a foot of Credibility as any other Facts re-
lated in History, but not so in *other Instances*.
I only wish he had explained himself better,
and pointed out those *different* Instances, that
we might see which Miracles in his Opini-
on deserve Credit, and which do not. But
it is manifest he did not aim here, no more
than in all the rest of his *Discourse*, at clear-
ing, but rather at confounding the Sub-
ject, and he thought to have gained a great
Point, if he could but raise in his Readers
Minds a Suspicion that *some* of the Miracles

reported in the Gospel have not a sufficient Foundation for Credit, which must of Course shake our Belief concerning the rest. However, we may judge of his Meaning by the particular Instance he alledges immediately after.

“ That there was, says he ^c, such a Person as *Constantine the Great*, is considered as a Matter of Fact; and that he and his Soldiers saw the *Figure of the Cross* in the Heavens, is likewise considered as a Matter of Fact; but then the latter of those Facts does not stand upon a like Foot of Credibility with the former, supposing them both to be related in the same History, there being a Variety of Circumstances, which afford a proper Foundation for Credit with respect to the former, whereas those Circumstances are wanting with regard to the latter.” But by his leave, if these two Facts are related in the same History, as he supposes they are, and withal properly attested, I do not see what probable Circumstances are wanting in the *latter*, which attend the *former*; unless it be this, that the one was *natural*, and the other was *not*. And indeed what he adds plainly shews, that he meant something like it; *therefore*,

^c *Ibid.* p. 96, 97.

says

says he, *there is not the like Foundation for Credit with respect to the latter, even though Constantine, and all his Army had become Vouchers in the Case.* But why should not the joint Testimony of so many People in their Senses, and in a Case which required only the use of their Senses, be admitted as true? Why, it seems, "*Christianity was then struggling with, and lifting up its Head above Paganism in the Roman Empire, and Constantine and his Soldiers considered themselves as engaged in the Cause of God, and fighting under the Banner of their heavenly Captain; and as their Success naturally intoxicated their Minds, by giving too great a briskness to their Spirits, so this prepared and disposed them to imagine that they saw and heard any thing prodigious that was started, if it appeared to favour their Cause.*"

But all this is as groundless as it is invidious; for *Christianity was not then lifting up its Head above Paganism*: The cruel Persecution under the Tyrant *Maximin*, which had lasted near *nine* Years, still continued with the same Fury: *Maxentius* was not more favourable to the Christians in *Italy* and *Africa*; and though they enjoyed some rest under *Constantius*, who possessed *Gaul*,

Spain, Germany and Britain, this was but for a short Time, since he reigned but one Year and two Months : *Constantine* his Son, it is true, followed his wife and mild Administration, but published no Edict in their Favour, till some Time after his Conversion, and he was so far from being himself a *Christian*, either avowed or secret, that he seems to have been perfectly unacquainted with *Christianity* before that memorable Event. As to his Army, if the same Idolatrous Ceremonies, &c. which Soldiers had for many Centuries been obliged to perform at the Time of their enlisting, and upon other Occasions^a, were still in use, as it is very probable they were, since the contrary does not appear in History ; in that Case it must have been *mostly*, if not *entirely*, composed of *Heathens*, and there could be no *true, sincere Christian* in it. And therefore, neither *Constantine*, nor his Soldiers, considered themselves as engaged in the Cause of God, and their Suc-

^a See *Tertul.* de Corona c. xi. de Idololatria, c. 19, 20, 21. & *Apol.* c. xvi. *Laëtant.* de Mort. Perf. c. ix. *Origen.* cont. Cels. Lib. viii. and Mr. *Moyle's* Dissert. on the Thundering Legion, Vol. II. of his Works, p. 86. Add to this, that the *Dioclesian* Persecution which lasted so long must have cleared the Army from all open Christians, supposing there had been any such, since all that refused to sacrifice to the Heathen Gods were broke and turned out of it. *Laëtant.* de morte Perf. ubi supra, & *Euseb. Chron.*

cess, upon this Account, could never *intoxicate* *their Minds*, so as to make them *imagine that they saw and heard* what they did not. Far from being *prepared* and *disposed* for such a Delusion, they were rather *prejudiced*, or *armed* against it, as they had hardly any Notion of, and no Inclination at all to *Christianity*. But supposing they had, is it a *natural, necessary* Consequence that they should have been thereby *disposed* to mistake Fictions and Appearances for Realities? And what *Success* had they met with, great enough *to intoxicate their Minds*, and make them *Visionaries*? The Civil Power had not as yet declared in *favour*, much less for the *Establishment* of Christianity, and the History of those Times expressly observes, that *Constantine* was very cautious, even after his Conversion, how he proceeded in this Respect, no doubt for fear of provoking the Heathens, who were still very numerous and powerful; that when he was upon his Expedition against *Maxentius* at *Rome*, he implored the Assistance of Heaven, and laying aside the vulgar Deities, by which the World had been so long imposed upon, he addressed himself, not to *Christ*, or to God *the Father* through *Christ*, but to *the*

God of his Father, i. e. to the supreme Being (in opposition to all false Gods) whom his Father had worshipped; and that the Officers and Commanders of his Army, prompted by the *Augures* and *Aruspices*, looked upon this Sign of the *miraculous Cross* as an inauspicious Omen, portending an unfortunate Expedition; which is a new Proof that this Army was *mostly*, if not *entirely*, composed of Heathens. Now let the impartial Reader judge, whether this *Instance* is any thing to the Purpose, and whether Mr. *Chubb* has not brought it in, in order to make *Christianity* itself appear a parallel Case with it, as thus: *That there was such a Person as JESUS, there is a Variety of Circumstances which afford a proper Foundation for Credit with respect to it; but that he performed a great Number of Miracles of all kinds, and especially that he arose from the Dead, there is not the same Foundation for Credit.* The Apostles considered themselves as engaged in the Cause of God, and as their Success naturally intoxicated their Minds,—so this disposed them to imagine that they saw and heard any thing prodigious that was started, if it appeared to favour their Cause. But from this Charge of *Enthusiasm*, the Trial of the Witnesses, &c. has so fully cleared them, that
I must

I must refer the Reader again to that excellent Performance.

It has been constantly maintained by the Advocates of *Christianity*, "That if the
 " Proof arising from Miracles, in any Instance ^{*The Proof arising from them, is fully sufficient to determine*}
 " or Case, is as good as the Nature of the ^{*our Assent; and therefore those that require a better Evidence, are a very unreasonable Part.*}
 " Thing will admit; then it is very *unrea-*
 " *sonable* in any such Instance or Case, to re-
 " quire better Proof than the Nature of the
 " Thing will allow." But to this just
 Observation Mr. Chubb replies, " That it is
 " alike *unreasonable* in any Case, to require
 " *Assent* where there is *no* Proof, or to re-
 " quire a *stronger* Assent, than properly arises
 " from the Evidence; so that if it be *unrea-*
 " *sonable on one Side* to demand *certain* Proof
 " in a Case where, in the Nature of the
 " Thing, it *cannot* be given, then it must
 " be alike *unreasonable on the other Side*, to
 " demand an *absolute* Assent where that Proof
 " is wanting." This is his *last Effort* to
 undermine the grand Foundation of *Christi-*
anity, and as it were, the *last Gasp* of a
dying Cause. He cannot help acknowledg-
 ing, that it is very unreasonable to require
 a *better* Proof than that which arises from
Miracles, since it is *as good* as the Nature of
 the Thing will admit; but lest one should

take Advantage of this *tacit* Concession against him, he presently shifts the Case, and says, that *it is alike unreasonable to require Assent where there is no Proof, or to require a stronger Assent than properly arises from the Evidence*; insinuating that Christians are thus *unreasonable*, which cannot be but upon a Supposition, that with respect to Miracles, they either have *no Evidence at all*, or an Evidence which is *not sufficient* to create Belief, or *proportionate* to the Assent required. How *unfair* this *Insinuation* is, plainly appears from all that I have said hitherto, especially from this Observation, which has been always insisted on by those who have treated this Subject, *namely*, that we do not pretend here to *Demonstration*, properly so called, the Nature of the Thing not admitting it, but only to *Moral Evidence*, founded upon the *Testimony* of Eye-witnesses; and that nevertheless this Evidence is *sufficient* to determine our *Assent* so far as to produce in us a *firm Persuasion* (which will influence our Practice) or what we call *Faith*^b. From whence it follows, that it is very *reasonable* to require such an *Assent*, and that those who withhold it act a very *unjustifiable* Part, for which they

^b See before, p. 334, and following.

may and will be called to an Account by the great Judge of the World.

And if Mr. Chubb wants *Authorities* in this respect, let him read what the celebrated Mr. Locke says concerning the *Degrees of Assent*^c, viz. that our *Assent* ought always to be regulated by the Grounds of *Probability*, which, as he has shewn before^d, are, *either Conformity with our own Experience, or the Testimony of others Experience*; and that we assent as firmly to the Truth of Facts founded upon either of these, and act as resolutely according to that Assent, as if they were infallibly demonstrated. And he declares farther, with respect to *Miracles* in particular, that
“ though the common Experience, and the
“ ordinary Course of Things, have justly a
“ mighty Influence on the Minds of Men,
“ to make them give or refuse Credit to any
“ Thing proposed to their Belief: yet there
“ is one Case wherein the *Strangeness of the*
“ *Fact lessens not the Assent to a fair Testi-*
“ *mony given of it.* For where such super-
“ natural Events are suitable to Ends aimed
“ at by him who has the Power to change
“ the Course of Nature, there, under such

^c *Essay on Human Understanding*, B. iv. c. 16. ^d *Ibid.*
c. 15.

“ Circum-

“ Circumstances, they may be the fitter to procure Belief, by how much the more they are beyond, or contrary to ordinary Observation. This is the proper Case of Miracles, which well attested, do not only find Credit themselves, but give it also to other Truths, which need such Confirmation.”
 This is not only *Authority*, but sound, unanswerable *Reasoning*, which naturally brings me to a general *Conclusion* of this whole TREATISE.

A general Conclusion of the whole.

If what I have endeavoured to prove be true, that God *alone* is the immediate efficient *Cause* of Miracles, and that therefore Miracles are a *direct* and *absolute* Proof of a *divine* Mission; that *Christ* wrought *true* Miracles, and that the *repeating* of them would be equally *unnecessary*, *unreasonable*, and even *unjust*; that the Want of *Universality* in the Propagation of his Religion, is *no* Argument that the Miracles wrought in Support of it, do not proceed from God, but from some other superior invisible Beings; that the Apostles who relate them, were neither *Enthusiasts* nor *Credulous*, neither *Deceivers* nor *Deceived*; that the *Evidence* of their Testimony is so far from *decreasing* by Length of

^c *Ibid.* ch. xvi. 13.

Time, that it rather *increases* by new Circumstances intervening; that the *Gospels*, in which this *Testimony* is recorded, are *Authentic*, and that no Objection can be made against them from the *Time*, or *Places*, wherein they were wrote, or from the *Manner* in which they were kept by the *primitive Christians*; that *all* the Apostles have *witnessed* in this Case, and that their *Depositions* are as *express*, and as *plain*, and as *full* as can be desired; and *lastly*, that this *Testimony* affords, not only a *probable*, but a *certain* Proof of the Truth of the Miracles which they report; and in short, that the *Evidence* arising from it is *sufficient* to determine any *reasonable* Man, and if attended to, *cannot* fail to engage our Belief, and influence our Lives; If ALL this, I say, be TRUE, then I am sure, we have an *invincible* Argument, an Argument *next* to a *Demonstration*, of *Christ's* being sent from God, and consequently of his Religion being *divine*; and those who reject it, in Spite of this *great* Evidence, are utterly *inexcusable*. In vain do they seek to deceive themselves by such groundless Difficulties and Objections as I have now, I hope, *fully* confuted. They must

must do more, if they will act the Part of *rational* Beings, and answer it to their own Consciences; they must, by clear and uncontestable Proofs, overthrow *all* and *every one* of the Articles of the grand Argument I have summ'd up. Till they be able to do this, Reason tells them that they ought to submit to that MOST EXCELLENT INSTITUTION, which, with all their Wit and Learning, their Malice and Spite, they cannot disprove. GOD GRANT that they may see their Error before it is too late, and that this Book, which was wrote in the Love of Truth, and in the Spirit of Meekness and Charity, MAY, imperfect as it is, contribute to their *Recovery*, as well as to the *Etablissement* of *Christians* themselves!

POST.

POSTSCRIPT.

WHILE the foregoing TREATISE was printing, there came out a Pamphlet, intitled, AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE to a Larger Work, designed hereafter to be published, concerning the Miraculous Powers which are supposed to have subsisted in the Christian Church, from the earliest Ages, through several successive Centuries; tending to shew, that we have no sufficient Reason to believe upon the Authority of the primitive Fathers, that any such Powers were continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles. As this Subject does not essentially belong to a General Treatise on Miracles, chiefly levelled against Deists and Infidels, I had no Thoughts at first of entering into an Examination of it. But considering that my Readers might be of another Opinion, and that the Author of this Introductory Discourse had inconsiderately advanced
some

some Things, that *may* affect the *grand* Argument from *Miracles* which I have been labouring to settle upon a solid Foundation, I judg'd it necessary *freely* to explain myself upon them. And had not the Impression of my Book been too far gone, I would have inserted my Remarks in a more proper Place, *viz.* where I confute the pretended *Necessity* of repeating Miracles from Time to Time, for the Conviction of Unbelievers. I have not room to enlarge upon the Subject, and therefore shall content myself with *general Observations*, which may serve to enable the Reader to judge of the Author's *Hypothesis*, that Miracles entirely ceased at the Death of the Apostles.

First then, this *Hypothesis* seems to be owing to “ what the *Gentleman* had occasion-
 “ ally observed and heard of the late growth
 “ of Popery in this Kingdom,—and that the
 “ most powerful of all their [the *Papists*]
 “ Arguments, and what gains them the most
 “ Profelytes is, their confident Attestation of
 “ Miracles as subsisting still in their Church,
 “ and the clear Succession of them, which
 “ they deduce through all History, from the
 “ Apostolic Times down to our own^a. For

^a See p. 4. of the *Introductory Discourse*.

he thought, no doubt, that the best Way to deprive them at once of this *most powerful Argument*, was to shew that *the Power of working Miracles was not continued to the Church after the Days of the Apostles*. But I would fain ask him, what *Necessity* there was to have Recourse to such an *Expedient* as this. Admitting that *the Proof from Miracles is of all others the most striking to vulgar Minds, and the most decisive indeed to all Minds, as far as it is believed to be true^a*, which I have fully shewn in the foregoing *Treatise*, to be in Fact the Case; admitting this, I say, does it follow that all the pretended Miracles of the Church of *Rome* must be allowed, unless we make it appear that Miracles entirely ceased upon the Death of the Apostles? Is there no other Way to disprove them? no *Criteria* by which one may easily judge whether they be true or false? Surely, there are, and those I have already laid down^b, which are plain and obvious, will suffice to give an immediate Satisfaction in this respect. Are these Miracles in themselves *possible*, or *consistent* with our natural Notions? Do they not favour of *Romance* and *Fable*? Were they wrought *only* upon extraordinary, important

^a *Ibid.*^b P. 21, &c.

H h

Occasions,

Occasions and where the Salvation of Man-
 kind was *nearly* concerned, without any O-
stentation or *Apparatus*, openly, in the Face
 of the Sun, and by a Word of Command? Or
 are they not justly liable to the Suspicion of
 being but *juggling Tricks*, and *pious Frauds*?
 Are they *connected* with *subsequent Faëts*, not
 to be accounted for in a natural Way, or
 otherwise than by supposing the Truth of
 some *immediate* divine Interposál? Do they
 appear *at first Sight* and to a *common Under-*
standing, to be the Works of God, and not
 the Productions of Art or Nature, nor the
 Impostures of designing Men? Whoever will
 take the Trouble to *try* them by these *Rules*,
 will soon be convinced that they are but
mere Forgeries; and indeed this does not re-
 quire much Trouble, the only reading of
 what Dr. *Middleton* himself, the Author of
 the *Introductory Discourse*, &c. has so well
 said concerning them, in the last Edition of
 his *Letter from Rome*, &c. is enough in my
 Opinion, to open the Eyes of the poor de-
 luded *Papists* themselves. And therefore
 there was no Necessity to fix the precise Date
 of the ceasing of Miracles in the *Christian*
 Church, and much less to place it as high as
 the

the Death of the Apostles, in order to overthrow those boasted of in the Church of *Rome*.

But perhaps it will be said, that this Writer's Method of arguing with *Papists*, is the shortest, as it at once cuts off all Pretensions to Miracles among them. This I might absolutely deny, since it will require much more Trouble and Learning to prove that Miracles entirely ceased at the Death of the Apostles, than to apply the before-mentioned Rules, which plain Reason and common Sense dictate, to the pretended Wonders of the Church of *Rome*; witness the *Larger Work* itself, which we have been promised so long before-hand, and is to make out that extraordinary Assertion. But I will allow it for the present, and shall only ask, is this Method then to be admitted, merely because it makes short Work? I hope it will be granted, that it must also appear to be built upon good and sure Grounds. Let us therefore carefully look into it, and see whether it will stand the Test of a rational and just Criticism.

I observe then *Secondly*, that in order to prove his *Hypothesis*, Dr. Middleton supposes as a Matter of Fact, that *in the third, fourth,*

and fifth Centuries, the chief Corruptions of Popery were, either actually introduced, or the Seeds of them so effectually sown, that they could not fail of producing the Fruits, which we now see: And by these Corruptions he means, the Institution of Monkeny, the Worship of Reliques, Invocation of Saints, Prayers for the Dead; the superstitious Use of Images, of the Sacraments, of the Sign of the Cross, and of consecrated Oil. "By the Efficacy of all which Rites, he says, and as a Proof of their divine Origin, perpetual Miracles are affirmed to have been wrought in these very Centuries"; And after having considered distinctly these several Articles, and endeavoured to make out his Assertion, he concludes thus; "On the whole then — I find great Reason to be convinced, that the pretended Miracles of the fourth Century, were not only in general and for the greatest Part, but intirely and universally, the Effects of Fraud and Imposture".

I readily grant that the before-mentioned *Corruptions were either introduced, or the Seeds of them effectually sown in the fourth and fifth*

^a *Introd. Disc. p. 12.*

^b *Ibid. p. 29.*

Centuries;

Centuries; but I deny that they were so in the third, and the Author himself has not been able to prove it with all his Skill. He quotes indeed *Justin Martyr*, to shew that in his Time the Cup was constantly mixed with Water, and a Portion of the consecrated Elements sent also to the Absent. But can this be called an Abuse or a Corruption? He owns himself, that mixing Water with Wine in the Cup, was consider'd at first as prudential only, and indifferent; and so it was in fact. The Passage of *Irenæus*, which he alledges, does not import, as he says, that this Mixture had been taught (and consequently enjoined) by our Saviour; but it only supposes that he practised it^c, which the good Father took for granted, because such had been for some time the general Practice of the Church. And as to the other Passage of *St. Cyprian*, quoted in this Place, it does not import what *Dr. Middleton* imagines, that mixing Water

^c The Words are, *Accipiens Panem, suum Corpus esse confitebatur; & temperamentum Calicis, suum Sanguinem confirmavit.* Iren. L. 4. c. 57. What led the Doctor into the Mistake, I suppose is, that he thought *temperamentum Calicis* must be construed with *confirmavit*, whereas it is the Accusative of *Accipiens*; *Accipiens temperamentum Calicis, confirmavit sanguinem suum.* Having taken the Cup mixed, he affirmed that it was his Blood.

with Wine, is declared by that Father to have been enjoined to him by a divine Revelation^a. There is not a Word here of *Revelation*, much less of *divine Revelation*; he only says *he had been admonished that our Lord's Tradition ought to be observed, in offering or administering the Cup*; and not that he was so *admonished by a Revelation from Heaven*; and I think the whole should be translated thus:

“ Do not imagine that what I am writing to
 “ you is of my own Head, and a mere hu-
 “ man Precept, and that I rashly take up-
 “ on me to do this without any Authority.
 “ — I would have you know then, that I
 “ am *admonished*, (or put in Mind) that our
 “ Lord's Tradition ought to be observed in
 “ offering (or administering) the Cup, and
 “ that we are not to do any thing in this
 “ Respect, but what our Saviour himself has
 “ done first for us; *viz.* that the Cup
 “ which is offered in *Commemoration* of him,
 “ be administered with Wine put in it^b. ”

^a *Introduet. Discourse, p. 16.*

^b The Words are, *Nec nos putes nostra et humana conferi-
 bere, aut ultronea voluntate hoc nobis audacter assumere. —
 Admonitos autem nos scias, (St. Austin reads vos sciatis, which
 makes the Sense quite plain and natural, you are therefore
 admonished) ut in Calice offerendo Dominica Traditio servetur,
 neque aliud fiat à nobis, quam pro nobis Dominus prior fecerit:
 Ut Calix qui in Commemoratione ejus offertur, mixtus vino
 offeratur. Epist. ad Cæcil. LXIII. Edit. Oxford 1682.*

This

This whole Letter is levell'd against a Sort of Heretics in those Times, called *Aquarii*, from that they administered the Cup with Water only, either through Ignorance, or fear of Persecution; for as they took the Sacrament very early and fasting, they were afraid of being discovered by their Breath, if they should drink Wine. Against them St. *Cyprian* urges the Necessity, not of mixing Water with Wine, but of Wine only, by several Arguments, some of them *mystical*, as that taken from our Saviour's Words, *John* xv. 1. *I am the true Vine*^c, or from the Example of *Melchisedec*, who offered to *Abraham* Bread and Wine; and some others *literal*, as what *Christ* said to his Disciples in instituting his holy Supper, *I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine*, *Matt.* xxii. 29. And therefore it is plain, that the *Tradition of our Lord which*, that Father says, *he was admonished to have observed*, did not relate to the mixing of Water with Wine, but to the using of Wine in the Cup, in Opposition to those who only made Use of Water; which is nothing to Dr. *Middleton's* Purpose. Indeed it is not to be denied that St.

Nam cum dicat Christus, Ego sum vitis vera; sanguis Christi non aqua est utique, sed vinum.

Cyprian speaks here of *Mixture*, and seems to suppose, that our Saviour himself mingled Water with Wine; but this was only founded, as I have already observed, upon the current Practice of the Church for a long Time, and a Presumption that in such a warm Climate as *Judea*, and in so sober a Company as *Christ* and his Disciples were, he must naturally have mixed Water with Wine^d. The sending of the sacred Elements to the *Absent*, who upon Account of Illness, or Persecution, could not come to Church, was certainly piously intended at first; and there is a great Difference between People's original Intention, and the Abuse which other Men may make of it. If *Christians* afterwards perverted this useful, comfortable Institution to bad Purposes, if they looked upon the Sacrament,

^d There is an excellent Note of the Editor of *Cyprian* upon this Passage, which I shall here transcribe, as it agrees with my Explication of it, *Quando toties ingerit ut calix sit mixtus, id potissimum agit, NE VINUM DESIT CALICI. Quanquam enim ad conciliandum Aquariorum animos, & receptum in Ecclesia morem asserendum, aquam in Eucharistia ritè adhiberi agnoscat Cyprianus, qua Plebs Christiana adumbratur, & opinatus sit vino cibario & diluta Christum fuisse usum; omnia tamen ad Dominicæ Institutionis normam prorsus exigenda contendit, ut id scilicet fiat quod Jesus Christus Dominus & Deus noster, Sacrificii Auctor et Doctor, non tantum FECIT sed DOCUIT.*

as a Sort of *Amulet* or *Charm*, as it is but too true they did, it does not follow that it *became the Source of so much Superstition*, as he would have it. The most that can be said is, that it was an *Occasion* of it, but the true *Cause* was the Corruption of the Christians themselves; for the best Things may be, and are daily abused, which is no Objection to their lawful Use.

To prove that the Custom of *praying for the Dead* is as antient as *Tertullian*, a Passage is alledged out of his *Monogamia*^d, which in my humble Opinion is very little to the Purpose, as he published that Piece some Years after he had embraced the Errors of *Montanus*, and when he was become so great a Fanatic, and withal so transported with Passion against the *Orthodox*, that he did not very well know what he said. Besides, what he advances in this Place, is but silly, pitiful Reasoning, and the Fact upon which it is founded, *viz.* that *the Widow prays for the Soul of her departed Husband*, may be as groundless as the Consequence drawn from it, that by doing so *she keeps up her conjugal Union*, she is still *married in the Spirit*, and cannot therefore *marry* a second Time. In short, unless bet-

^d C. x. p. 682.

ter Authorities than this can be produced, and the *Doctor* does not produce any other, it may be justly denied that this Custom was established in the *third* Century. The *Sign of the Cross* was, it is true, much in use at that Time, as appears from another Passage of *Tertullian*, here quoted out of his Book *de Coronâ* iii; though I might alledge the same Reasons against it, as against the preceding, since this Book was wrote also after his turning *Montanist*. But this Custom was in itself, not only very innocent, but very justifiable, and therefore could not *be the Subject of much Superstition*, as the Author supposes it was in that Age, but without proving it, since he is forced to go to the *fourth* Century for Instances of .it. And indeed *Tertullian* expresses himself in such a Manner as sufficiently shews, that there was as yet no Superstition in this respect: for though he says that this *Sign* was very frequently used, yet he ascribes no particular Virtue to it, and he carefully observes that it is founded upon Custom only, and not enjoined by the Gospel. *If, says he, for these and other Practices of the same kind, you require a Precept from the Scriptures, you will find none; but the Authority*

ity of Tradition will be alledged to you for it^e.

But, besides that these few Practices, viz. the mixing of Water with Wine in the Cup, sending the consecrated Elements to the Absent, praying for the Dead, and the Sign of the Cross, do not appear, by the Authorities above, (and the *Doctor* produces no other) to have been either introduced in the *third* Century, or the Cause and Source of the monstrous Superstitions that over-run the Church in After-Ages; there are many others here mentioned, and of a much more pernicious Nature, which can never be proved to have had their Rise in that Century; as the *Institution of Monckery*, the *Worship of Reliques*, the *Invocation of Saints*, and the *superstitious Use of Images*, and of the *consecrated Oil*. Whoever will take the Trouble to look into *Ecclesiastical History*, will soon be convinced that no Foot-steps of these Corruptions are to be met with till after the Establishment of Christianity by *Constantine*. Nay we there find several Passages, by which it appears, that the Christians of

* Harum & aliarum ejusmodi Discipularum si Legem expostules Scripturarum, nullam invenies, Traditio tibi prætenditur Auctrix. *Ibid.*

the *three* first Centuries were very far from being tainted with them. I shall only quote two or three. In the Epistle of the Church of *Smyrna* to that of *Pontus*, concerning the Martyrdom of St. *Polycarp* their Bishop, which happened A. D. CLXVI, we are told that *the Christians* present at it carried away his Bones, which they buried in a Place where they assembled together, *to celebrate with Joy and Chearfulness the Day of his Martyrdom, thus honouring the Memory of those that have fought gloriously for the Defence of their Religion, and to confirm and instruct others by such Examples*^a. These are their very Words, which shew that they had not the least Notion of, nor practised any Thing like *the Worship of Reliques*, nor even of the *Martyrs* themselves. And what confirms it beyond all Doubt, is their Answer to the Calumny of some *Heathens*, who prompted by the *Jews*, begg'd the *Pro-consul*

^a The whole Passage runs thus, Οὕτω τε ἡμῖς ὕστερον ἀνελόμενοι τὰ τιμιώτερα λιθῶν πολυβίων καὶ δοκιμώτερα ὑπὲρ χερσίων ὅσα αὐτῷ, ἀπεθίμεθα ὅπως καὶ ἀκολουθῶν ἦν ἔνθα ὡς δυνατοὶ ἡμῖν συναθρομένοις, ἐν ἀγαλλιάσει καὶ χαρᾷ, παρίξῃ ὁ Κύριος ἐπιτελεῖν τὴν τῷ μαρτυρίᾳ αὐτῷ ἡμέραν γενέθλιον, εἰς τι τὴν τῶν ἡθλησάντων μνήμην καὶ τῶν πολλῶν ἀσκησὶν τι καὶ ἰτοιμασίαν. We have but a Fragment of this Letter in *Euseb. Hist. Eccles. L. IV. C. xv.* but it was published entire, first by Archbishop *Usher*, and afterwards by *Valesius*, *Stephanus Le Moine*, and others.

that

that he would not suffer them to have the Remains of *Polycarp*, for fear that leaving the crucified (Jesus Christ) they should take in their Heads to worship him; — But say they, These People did not know that we never can desert Christ, who has suffered for the Salvation of all those who shall be saved throughout the World, nor worship any other besides him: For we adore him as the Son of God; but as to the Martyrs, we worthily love them as the Disciples and Followers of the Lord, because of their superlative Zeal and Attachment to their King and Master^b. Such were the truly Christian Sentiments of a very distinguished Church towards the latter End of the second Century; and as the solemn anniversary Commemorations of the Martyrs took their Rise from what they did upon this remarkable Occasion, it is utterly improbable that the Christians of the next Century should so far mistake their Meaning, or deviate from their avowed Intention, as to

^b Μη, φροῖν, ἀφίλις τὸν ἐσαυρωμένον, τῆτον ἀρξάναι σέβεισθαι. — Ἀφροῦνις ὡς ἔτι τὸν χριστὸν ποτε κατὰ λιπὴν δουλοσύμειθα, τὸν ὑπὲρ τῆς τῆ πατρὸς κόσμου τῶν σωζομένων σωτηρίας παθόντα, — ἔτι ἑτέρῳ τινα σέβεισθαι. τῆτον μὲν γὰρ, εἶδὸν ὅσα τῷ Θεῷ προσκυνοῦμεν, τὸς δὲ Μαρτύρας, ὡς μαθήτας καὶ μιμητὰς τοῦ Κυρίου, ἀγαπᾶμεν ἀξίως, ἵνα καὶ εὐνοίας ἀντιπράξῃτε τῆς εἰς τὸν ἴδιον Βασιλεῖα καὶ Διδάσκαλοι.

worship

worship the *Reliques of the Martyrs*, pray for the *Dead*, and implore the Assistance of the *Blessed*. The Emperor *Julian*, who lived in the *fourth* Century, is the *first* who ever reproached the Christians with these Superstitions^c, which shews that they were quite new; for had they been of a much older Date, the Heathens would not have so long deferred taking Advantage of them to justify their own Idolatry. Let me add that in the Book of *Origen* concerning *Prayer*, which he published about the Middle of the *third* Century, there is not one Word of *praying for the Dead*, nor to the *Saints*, tho' he is very particular in treating his Subject, and even takes Notice of several Things relating to the Discipline or Practice of that Time.

As to the *superstitious Use of the holy Oil*, no Instance of it can be produced in the *third* Century; neither was *Monkery* then instituted. Dr. *Middleton* himself does not allege any Authority to prove the contrary. There were indeed many Persons of both Sexes, amongst the *Christians*, that lived in a State of Celibacy, and submitted to the

^c Vid. *Cyroll. cont. Jul. Lib. x. p. 336. & Jul. Litter. L. lii. sub finem.*

Austerities of an *Ascetic* Life; but they did not form Societies, nor retired from the World, as Monks do, and what they did in this respect was purely to avoid Persecution, and in order to attain to a greater Perfection. St. *Anthony* is said to have retired into a solitary Place about the Year cclxx, after having sold all his Goods, and distributed the Price of them to the Poor; and therefore he is justly looked upon as the first Founder of the *Eremitical*, but not of the *Monastic* Life. For it was but in cccv, that he quitted his Cell to take Care of those that followed him in great Numbers: and though upon this, a kind of *Monasteries* were built in the Desarts of *Egypt*, yet were they not under any particular Rule, every Body was at Liberty to live in them as they pleased, and as long as they pleased^d. It is St. *Pachomius*, who lived in the *fourth* Century, that ought properly to be considered as the Author and Institutor of *Monkery*, because he was the *first* that appointed regulated Societies, and he peopled all the *upper Thebais* with Monasteries of his Order^e. I must add farther, that

^d See his Life attributed to St. *Athanasius*, in the *Bibliotheca Patrum*.

^e See *Dupin's* new History of Ecclesiastical Writers, upon *Pachomius*.

even in this Century, the Institution of *Monks* does not appear to have been attended with any of those flagrant Abuses and Enormities for which it became soon after so very remarkable. Those who embraced that Way of Life, were led to it by a religious Principle; their Behaviour was suitable and truly exemplary; they distinguished themselves by all kinds of good Offices towards their Neighbours, and their Monasteries were as so many Hospitals. Witness the Edict which the Emperor *Julian* published, or intended to publish, for erecting Houses in Imitation of those Monasteries, that it might not be said, as was but too plainly the Case, that the *Christians* very much surpassed the *Heathens* in Public-spiritedness, Charity, and Benevolence^a.

Lastly, It is a very gross Mistake to place the Origin of *the superstitious Use of Images* in the *third* Century, since *Images* were not so much as thought of then. It was but in the *fourth* Century, and when stately Churches begun to be built and endowed under the Reign of *Constantine the Great*, that they first painted the Insides of Churches,

^a See *Sozomen's Hist. Eccles. Lib. v. c. 16. Naz. Orat. i. in Jul. and Jul. Letter to Arsacius the High-Priest.*

and decorated them with Representations of the History of the Martyrs. But even then they paid no *religious* Honours, nor attributed any *Virtue* to these Images: This Abuse was introduced by Degrees, and in Process of Time. And indeed it appears by St. *Epiphanius*, who flourished towards the End of the *fourth* Century, that it was not as yet established, neither by any Canon of the Church, Decree of Council, nor even by the common Practice of Christians; nay, that Images were not then so much as admitted in many Churches, particularly in those of the Isle of *Cyprus*, of which he was *Metropolitan*. For there is among his Works a Letter to *John of Jerusalem*, translated by St. *Jerom*, the second Part of which concerns a particular Matter of Fact, related by St. *Epiphanius* in these Words: “ When I entered
“ into the Church of a Village of *Palestine*,
“ called *Anablatha*, I found there a Curtain
“ hanging over the Door, whereon was
“ painted an Image like that of *Jesus*
“ *Christ*, or some Saint (for I do not re-
“ member whose Picture it was.) But see-
“ ing in the Church of *Christ* the Image of
“ a Man, *contrary to the Authority of Holy*
“ *Scripture*, I tore it, and gave Orders to

“ the Church-Wardens to bury some dead
 “ Body in this Curtain; and when they
 “ murmured and said, that if I would tear
 “ this Curtain I ought to give them another,
 “ I promised them to do so, and now I per-
 “ form my Promise.” *Baronius, Bellar-*
min, and other Champions of the Church of
Rome, seeing how strong this Passage is
 against *Image-Worship*, have endeavoured to
 prove it supposititious, but by such Reasons
 as are either mere Conjectures, or visibly
 confute themselves. And Mr. *Dupin* is so
 ingenuous as to acknowledge it, and says
 farther, that *though it be true—that from*
that Time there were Pictures in some
Churches, which represented the Histories of
the Scriptures, and of the Actions of Saints
and Martyrs; yet it cannot be said that this
Custom was general, and it must be confessed
that St. Epiphanius disapproved it, and
thought it did not agree with Holy Scrip-
ture^a.

And now, I hope, I have fully shewn
 that the Corruptions, which Dr. *Middleton*
 affirms to have taken their Rise in the *third*
Century, and to have occasioned many forged

^a See his *New History of Ecclesiastical Writers*, &c.

Miracles,

Miracles, were not so much as known or thought of in those Times. And if I have enlarged upon this Subject, it is not only the better to disprove his Assertion, but also in order at once to deprive the *Romanists* of the Advantage they take from the pretended Conformity of their Worship with that of the primitive Church, by clearly shewing, that all the Superstitions that attend it, none excepted, were unknown to the Christians of the three first Centuries. For though our Dispute with them be not properly how *ancient*, but how *true* their Doctrines and Practices are, as the *Doctor* very well observes; yet as they never fail to insist upon that popular Argument as decisive in their Favour, and thereby draw in many unwary People, it is necessary to expose the Fallacy and Groundlessness of it, as often as Opportunity offers. This learned Gentleman himself seems to have been sensible at last, that the Origin of the before-mentioned Corruptions ought not to be placed at all in the *third* Century, for he drops that Century in the Course of his Argument, which he concludes thus: “ On the whole then; after the
“ strictest Attention to what both the An-
“ tients and the Moderns have delivered on

“ this Subject, I find great Reason to be
 “ convinced that the pretended Miracles of
 “ the FOURTH Century, were not only in
 “ general, and for the greatest Part, but
 “ ENTIRELY and UNIVERSALLY, the Ef-
 “ fects of Fraud and Imposture^a.” But
 by his Leave, I think that any impartial
 Reader must find his *Conclusion* by much
 too strong for the *Premises*: For what has
 he proved hitherto, admitting that he real-
 ly proved it? Why, that in the *fourth* Cen-
 tury many superstitious Usages and Customs
 were introduced, in favour of which *many*
 Miracles were forged. And what is the
 natural, necessary Consequence of this? Is it
 that *all* the Miracles of that Century, *with-*
out Exception, were the Effects of Fraud and
 Imposture? No certainly; for does it follow
 that because there were *many* counterfeit Mi-
 racles, therefore there was *not one* true? To
 make out this, the *Doctor* should have taken
 a particular View of *all* the Wonders said to
 have been wrought in that Age. He should at
 least, before he had drawn such a strange
 Conclusion, have examined what is report-
 ed of the Miracle which obtained a Victory
 for the Emperor *Marcus Aurelius*, of the

^a *Introduet. Discourse*, p. 29.

miraculous Sign of the Cross, which converted *Constantine the Great*, of the miraculous Silence of the Oracle, and burning of the Temple of *Apollo Daphnæus* at *Antioch*, and of the miraculous Interruption of rebuilding that of *Jerusalem* in the Reign of *Julian*. Probably he reserves this for his *larger Work*, but then he should also have reserved his Conclusion for it. However I must observe, that he endeavours to make it good upon a very extraordinary Principle which he advances.

“ I take it, says he, to be a Maxim on
 “ which we may safely depend, that where-
 “ ever the Bishops, the Clergy, and the
 “ principal Champions of the Christian Cause
 “ are found to be tampering with false Mi-
 “ racles, and establishing new Rites and
 “ Doctrines by Lies and Forgeries, it would
 “ be vain for us to look for any true Mi-
 “ racles in that Age, and that Church. And
 “ this was actually the Case of the fourth
 “ Century : In which all its most illustri-
 “ ous Fathers, now Saints of the Catholic
 “ Church, *St. Athanasius*, *St. Epiphanius*,
 “ *St. Basil*, *St. Gregory of Nyssa*, *St. Am-*
 “ *brose*, *St. Jerom*, *St. Austin*, and *St. Chry-*
 “ *ostom*, have all severally recorded and so-
 “ lemnly attested a Number of Miracles,

“ said to be wrought in Confirmation of
 “ some favourite Institutions of those Days,
 “ which, in the Judgment of all learned
 “ and candid Protestants, are manifestly fic-
 “ titious and incredible.”

Both this *Maxim*, and the *Application* of it may justly be denied. For supposing the greatest Corruption and Imposture imaginable, in any Age whatsoever; does it follow, that there cannot be any true Miracle performed, in such an Age? This would be limiting the Power and Wisdom of God, who may have as good, and even better Reasons to exert both in *wicked*, than in *virtuous* Times. Nay, this is contradicted by Matter of Fact. I believe there never was a greater Corruption, more Fraud in Point of Miracles, and a more general Propensity either to *tamper with*, or to believe any thing of that kind, than in the Period which elapsed from the Death of *Christ* to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*; I have already said enough to prove it^b, and the Reader may, for a further Satisfaction, look into *Josephus* his *History of the Jewish Wars*: And yet God was pleased to work, in that very Pe-

^a *Introd. Discourse*, p. 30.

^b See p. 188, 199.

riod, numberless Miracles through the Hands of the Apostles, which I hope Dr. Middleton will not reject for that single Reason. And therefore, though *the Bishops, the Clergy, and the principal Champions of the Christian Cause*, in the *fourth Century*, should be found *tampering with false Miracles, &c.* it would not follow that *it is in vain for us to look for ANY TRUE Miracles in that Age, and in that Church.* But is this really the Case? Yes, and worse too, if we believe the *Doctor*; for *the principal Fathers of that Age have affirmed as true* (in point of Miracles) *what they themselves had either forged, or what they knew at least to be forged*^b. A heavy Charge this! And how is it supported? Why, truly, by mere *Presumptions*; for no one Instance is alledged, which clearly and sufficiently proves that these Fathers did in fact, either forge Miracles, or report any which they knew to be forged. *All the Passages here quoted out of their Writings, only shew that they have published many Stories of Miracles as true, which are improbable or incredible.* But does it necessarily follow that they *designedly* supposed or propagated them?

^b *Introd. Discourse, p. 36.*

No surely! They might as well have believed them *too credulously*; and both Charity, and what we know of their Piety, obliges us to think so, rather than to tax them with *Knavery*.

I have no more Veneration for the *Fathers* than what they really deserve, and I freely acknowledge that those especially of the *fourth* Century may be justly charged with many Errors and Weaknesses; to have exaggerated Things, and carried the Respect due to Saints and Martyrs to an Excess: But to treat them as *Knaves* and *Fools*, is really intolerable, when they have given sufficient Proofs of their great Learning, and remarkable Zeal, though sometimes misguided, for the Glory of God, and the Advancement of true Religion among Mankind. The Doctor himself, who is not always consistent, or perhaps would soften what he has too bluntly and too inconsiderately advanced, acknowledges after all^c, that *they may have been deluded so far by other People's Forgeries, as to take them for real Miracles*; and that, *partly from a weak Credulity, and partly from Reasons of Policy,—they were induced to espouse*

^c *Ibid.* p. 37, 41.

and propagate pretended Miracles for the Support of a righteous Cause. As to Reasons of Policy, I do not see they could have any, unless it were to comply with the general Temper, and if I may so call it, Fashion, of the Age they lived in, which was an Overfondness for Miracles, attended with a proportionate Credulity. For as Christianity was then sufficiently established and highly supported by the Civil Power, as the Bishops had a much greater Authority and Interest than they ever had, and as the wicked Custom of selling spiritual and holy Things was not yet introduced, they could reap no Advantage from forging, or propagating forged Miracles, knowing them to be such; especially as it does not appear that they ever were themselves, either the Instruments, or the Objects of them. In short, whoever will impartially examine their Case, will soon acquit them from all Imputation of Knavery and Fraud, but at the same Time acknowledge that they were in general too credulous. When they report Miracles apparently false, as true, they speak with the Multitude; it is only the current Opinion and the current Language, which they deliver. But when they think for themselves, and are not hurried

ried away by the Notions and Prejudices of their own Times, they speak more rationally, and freely own that the Power of Miracles had, in a Manner, ceased; or, as the *Doct̃or* himself observes^a, that *the miraculous Gifts were then actually withdrawn, because the Church stood no longer in Need of them.* This is, in my humble Opinion, the right Way of reconciling the Contradictions, which are to be met with, in this respect, in the Writings of the Fathers, and of shewing how unjust the Censure is which that Gentleman passes upon them, viz. that they would own this, only *when they were disposed to speak the Truth.* Nay, their very Credulity may be excused in some Degree, if we consider that it was probably founded upon a *Presumption*, at least, that the Power of Miracles had continued in the Church, down to their Time; that it might proceed from Good Nature and Charity, which made them take the Report of pretended Miracles upon Trust, not suspecting any Fraud or Imposture in the first Relators of them; and that it was not so easy as may be imagined to come at the Truth; of which we have a Proof in what *St. Austin* says of the Miracles which he him-

^a P. 36.

self mentions, that “ wherever they were
 “ wrought, they were known but by a few
 “ People; and that when they were told to
 “ others by those who saw them, they did
 “ not come recommended by an Authority
 “ sufficient to make them be believed with-
 “ out any Doubt or Difficulty^b.” Would
 St. *Austin* have made so frank and so public
 a Declaration as this, if he and the rest of
 the Fathers had forged Miracles? Would
 they have so palpably contradicted themselves,
 as has been observed before? Impostors will
 take Care to speak more consistently, and to
 conceal their Fraud better.

But before I dismiss this Subject, I must
 observe farther, that Dr. *Middleton's* Ar-
 gument in this Place proves too much,
 and therefore proves nothing. For admit-
 ting, as indeed it cannot be denied, that in
 the *fourth* Century many Miracles, or Rela-
 tions of pretended Miracles, were forged,
 does it necessarily follow, that there were,
 or that there could be, no true Miracles at
 all? Is it inconsistent with the *moral* Perfec-
 tions of God, to interpose in an extraordina-

^b *Hæc ubicunque fiunt, ibi sciuntur vix a tota ipsa civi-
 tate.—Nam plerumque etiam ibi paucissimi sciunt,—Et quan-
 do alibi aliisque narrantur, non tanta ea commendat Autoritas,
 ut sine difficultate vel dubitatione credantur.*

ry Manner for very good Ends, only because there are Impostors who will counterfeit his Operations, or palm upon the World false Stories of Miracles? This can never be proved, and yet it is the only Thing that can make good the Conclusion. I have already observed, that in the very Days of the Apostles many such Forgeries were set on Foot, which nevertheless did not hinder them from working a great Number of true, undoubted Miracles. Nay, Christians soon spread abroad false Reports and spurious Books concerning the Miracles of our Saviour himself; such as the *Letter of Abgarus* to him, and *his Answer* to that King; the Book of *his Childhood*; the Gospels *according to the Hebrews*, and to *the Egyptians*^a. But will it follow, that because many false Miracles were attributed to him, therefore he never performed any true, real ones? What will not Deists infer from such a Conclusion, drawn by so learned and able Defender of *Christianity*?

I apprehend it now plainly appears how groundless the *Maxim* is, which the Doctor lays down, in order to prove that *the pre-*

^a See *Mill. Proleg.* and *Mr. Dupin's New History of Ecclesiastical Writers, &c.*

tended Miracles of the fourth Century were not only in general, and for the greatest Part, but entirely and universally, the Effects of Fraud and Imposture? And, as all his Reasonings tending to establish his grand *Hypothesis*, that *Miracles ceased at the Death of the Apostles*, are built upon this Proposition, they naturally fall with it to the Ground, and I might be excused taking any farther Notice of them; for if the Foundation is not good, the Superstructure can never stand. But lest the Reader should imagine that I am afraid to enter into this Argument, I will consider these Reasonings as so many independent Principles upon which the *Doctor* proceeds.

First then, he says, that “ when we reflect
“ on that surprizing Confidence and Secu-
“ rity with which the Fathers of this *fourth*
“ Age have affirmed as true, what they
“ themselves had either forged, or what they
“ knew at least to be forged; it is natural
“ to suspect, that so bold a Defiance of sa-
“ cred Truth could not be acquired, or be-
“ come general at once, but must have been
“ carried gradually to that Height, by Cu-
“ stom, and the Example of former Times,
“ and a long Experience of what the Cre-
“ dulity

“ dulity and Superstition of the Multitude
 “ would bear^b.” This is at best but a mere
Presumption, and Presumptions can never
 prove any Thing to be Matter of Fact; nay,
 it is of such a Nature, as, if admitted, would
 destroy the Credit of all true Miracles that
 ever were performed, even before the *fourth*
 or any other Century, and render Mira-
 cles either impracticable, or useless. For if
 the *third* Century becomes justly suspicious
 of Fraud, because the *fourth* was so grossly
 guilty of it; for the same Reason the *second*
 must fall under the same Suspicion, and so
 of Course must the *first*; because *it is na-*
tural to suspect, that so bold a Defiance of sa-
cred Truth, in the Fathers or Christians of
the third, or of the second Age, — must
have been carried gradually to that Height, by
Custom and the Example of former Times. So
 that, according to this most curious way of
 Reasoning, all the Miracles of *Christ* and his
 Apostles *may*, for any thing we know to the
 contrary, be nothing but *Fraud* and *Impo-*
sture; and this Presumption may equally af-
 fect all the Ages of the World, from the Be-
 ginning. But if it be so, ought not such

^b *Introduc. Discourse, p. 36.*

Reasonings as this to be rejected as vain and fallacious? For my part, I wonder that the *Doctor* could ever think of so weak and dangerous an *Argument*, which indeed has nothing of *Argument* in it. Was it only in the *fourth* Century, that Fraud and Imposture were boldly put in Practice? Every Age before, as well as after, had more or less of this Prevarication and Assurance. The Practice of counterfeiting, or forging Miracles, is almost as antient as the World itself; at least as the Performance of any true Miracle recorded in History; witness the *Magicians* of *Egypt*, who opposed *Moses*, and whose Science partly consisted in doing wonderful Things, or juggling Tricks, as I have shewn at large in the foregoing *Treatise*^a: And wherever this Practice obtains, it must be attended with great Confidence, since no Man can give into it, who has not lost all Modesty and Shame. But though *Fraud*, in Point of Miracles, be very antient, yet has it had a Beginning, and the *First* that made Use of it were not, nor could be determined to it by Custom and the Example of former Times, and a long Experience of what the Credulity and

^a P. 141, and following.

Superstition of the Multitude would bear, as the Doctor here asserts was the Case of the Fathers of the *fourth* Century; not considering that they might as well, and as naturally have fell into this Prevarication, of their own accord, and without the Example of former Times, so as to be the first Contrivers and Abettors of false Miracles. And therefore nothing can be more frivolous, nay more fallacious, than the Presumption upon which his whole Argument is built.

But he goes on, and says, *Secondly*, that *this Suspicion* (of the *second* and *third* Centuries having given the Example of forged Miracles to the *fourth*) will be strengthened,
 “ by considering that this Age, in which
 “ Christianity was established by the civil
 “ Power, had no real occasion for any Mi-
 “ racles.—So that it must have been a rash
 “ and dangerous Experiment, to begin to
 “ forge Miracles at a Time, when there was
 “ no particular Temptation to it; if the Use
 “ of such Fictions had not long been tried,
 “ and the Benefit of them approved and re-
 “ commended by their Ancestors, who
 “ wanted every Help towards supporting
 “ themselves under the Pressures and Perse-
 “ cutions, with which the Powers on Earth
 “ were

“ were afflicting them ^a.” Surely this is talking at a very odd, unreasonable Rate. What? Because the *fourth Century had no real Occasion for any Miracles*, and *there was then no particular Temptation to forge any*, does it follow that *it must have been a rash and dangerous Experiment to begin, at that Time, to put in Practice such Forgeries?* It is always, more or less, rash and dangerous to impose upon the World by Lies and Fictions, whether there be any Temptation to it, or no, especially when Religion is concerned; because the Cheat may be discovered, and the Discovery will naturally expose the Author of it to the most fatal Consequences. But this Danger can never encrease by the want of Temptation to the Imposture; and yet from this false Reasoning the Doctor boldly infers, without any Proof, that *the Use of such Fictions*, as are here attributed to the Fathers of the *fourth Century*, *had long been tried, and the Benefit of them approved and recommended by their Ancestors*. And in order to give some sort of Plausibility to this very uncharitable and unjust Accusation, he adds that *they* (these *Ancestors*, or the Fathers

^a *Introduct. Discourse*, p. 36, 37.

of the *third* and *second* Centuries) wanted every Help towards supporting themselves under the Pressures and Persecutions, with which the Powers on Earth were afflicting them. But if this way of arguing by Surmises and Presumptions be allowed; what will be the Consequence? I might as well say, that Dr. Middleton has in his *Introductory Discourse*, &c. made use of Lies and Forgeries, because, I am sure, he wanted every Help towards supporting his strange *Hypothesis*. Besides, let me ask the *Doctor*; Are Lies and Forgeries a good Means of supporting People under Pressures and Persecutions? I should think quite the Reverse, as the Discovery of their Imposture cannot fail to aggravate their Sufferings, and that very justly: And is it not unreasonable to suppose, that as they were persecuted for a Religion which strictly forbids all Manner of Frauds and Deceits, and to do Evil that Good may come, they should ever think of making use of such wicked, indirect Means, in order to be delivered out of, or supported under their Troubles? The Christians of the *second* and *third* Centuries, no doubt, wanted very extraordinary Helps and Assistances, amidst the cruel Oppressions and bitter Sufferings to which they were exposed

posed for the Sake of Truth, and I am fully persuaded that nothing less than a *miraculous Power*, could so effectually support and cheer them up; but it is quite absurd to suppose, that fictitious, forged Miracles could contribute in the least towards it.

A *third* Argument by which the *Doctor* endeavours to support his *Hypothesis*, is in these Words: “ If we compare the principal Fathers of the fourth, with those of the earlier Ages; we shall observe the same Characters of Zeal and Piety in them all, but more Learning, more Judgment, and less Credulity in the later Fathers. If these then be found, either to have forged Miracles themselves, or to have propagated what they knew to be forged, or to have been deluded so far by other People’s Forgeries, as to take them for real Miracles (of the one or the other of which, they were all unquestionably guilty); it will naturally excite in us the same Suspicion of their Predecessors, who, in the same Cause, and with the same Zeal, were less learned and more credulous, and in greater Need of such Arts for their Defence and Security^b.”

^b *Ibid.* P. 37.

K k 2

Here

Here again, instead of *Proofs*, we are entertained with mere *Suspensions* and *Conjectures*. The Fathers of the *second* and *third* Centuries must at any Rate be made guilty of Fraud and Imposture, because those of the *fourth* are imagined to be so; and to carry the Presumption against them farther, they are represented as *less learned, and more credulous*: But this is said without any Proof or Reason to support it. I am sure that *Origen*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, or *St. Cyprian*, do not come behind either *St. Athanasius*, *St. Epiphanius*, *St. Basil*, *St. Ambrose*, *St. Chrysostom*, *St. Jerom*, or *St. Austin*, in point of *Learning*: And as to *Judgment*, I cannot conceive upon what Foundation the *Doctor* would have them to be more *credulous*, when he has hardly been able to produce any Instance of it, while he has fairly proved the Charge upon the Fathers of the *fourth* Century. But admitting for Argument's Sake, that their *Ancestors* were *less learned and more credulous*; will it follow that they were more inclined, or even inclined at all, to forge Miracles? No, surely! It would prove, indeed, that they had a *greater Disposition to believe* any thing of that kind, but not that they would *impose* upon the World themselves.

Besides,

Besides, this is utterly incompatible with that *Character of Zeal and Piety*, which the *Doctor* allows them, and of which he says they had as great a Share as their Successors. Their standing in greater Need of such Arts for their Defence and Security, supposing they really did so, would not have excused their pious Frauds. But I have already shewn that these Frauds, far from being of any Service to them, must naturally have turned in the End to their own Confusion; and therefore they were in no Need of them at all.

The *fourth* and last Argument of the *Doctor* runs thus; "As the personal Characters of the earlier Fathers give them no Advantage over their Successors; so neither does the Character of the earlier Ages afford any real Cause of Preference, as to the Point of their Integrity, above the latter^a." Be it so! What is the Consequence? That the earlier Fathers *may* have imposed upon the World, or been themselves imposed upon, with respect to Miracles; but not that it was so *in fact*, and therefore this Argument proves just nothing. Moreover, that the primitive Christians have not the Preference in point of Integrity and Ho-

^a *Ibid.*

neſty, over thoſe of the ſucceeding Ages, is ſo far from being true, that the contrary moſt evidently appears by all *Eccleſiaſtical* Writers; and there is the greateſt Preſumption imaginable in favour of it. For certainly thoſe Ages which are *nearer* to the Origin of Chriſtianity, muſt naturally be *pur*er; and the State of Perſecutions and Sufferings, to which the Church was expoſed during that Period, compared with the Peace and Eaſe ſhe enjoyed afterwards, renders it *highly* probable, that the Virtue and Piety of the *earlier* Ages very much ſurpaſſed that of the *latter*, as they never appear brighter than when they are moſt ſeverely tried. Dr. *Middleton* himſelf has all along ſuppoſed the Caſe to be ſo, ſince he has had ſo little to object to the Fathers of the *three firſt* Centuries, and has charged thoſe of the *fourth* with downright Knavery; and it is ſurprizing to me how he could in this Place ſo poſitively aſſert the contrary. But he has, it ſeems, ſome particular Reaſons to alledge in Proof of it; “ For, ſays he, there never was any Period of “ Time in all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, in which “ ſo many *rank Hereſies* were publickly pro- “ feſſed, nor in which ſo many *ſpurious Books* “ were forged and publiſhed by the Chriſti-

“ans, under the Names of Christ and the
 “Apostles, and the Apostolic Writers, as in
 “those primitive Ages; several of which
 “forged Books are frequently cited and ap-
 “plied to the Defence of Christianity, by
 “the most eminent Fathers of the same
 “Ages, as true and genuine Pieces, and of
 “equal Authority with the Scriptures them-
 “selves. And no Man surely can doubt,
 “but that those who would either forge, or
 “make use of forged Books, would, in the
 “same Cause and for the same Ends, make
 “use of forged Miracles^b.”

I will allow that in the *three* first Ages of
 the Church, there were more *Heresies* broach-
 ed, and more *spurious Books* vented, than in
 any other equal Period of Time; but does it
 follow that therefore those Ages were not *the*
purest? Let these Heresies and spurious Books
 be never *so many*, they did not affect the
 greatest and soundest Part of Christians, who
 had no Share in them: And as to the Fa-
 thers in particular, they neither published
 Heresies, inconsistent with the true Faith,
 nor forged spurious Books. These, (if you ex-
 cept a few *apocryphal* Books, such as the *Let-*

• *Ibid.* P. 37, 38.

ter of J. C. to Abgarus, the Gospels according to the Egyptians, and to the Hebrews, the Canons and Constitutions of the Apostles, &c. which contained no material Errors, and were wrote by some well-meaning Persons) were the Productions of the very worst Christians, both in point of Opinion and Practice; such as the *Cerinthians*, the *Ebionites*, the *Nicolaitans*, the *Gnosticks*, &c. Moreover, there is no Comparison between the bad Effects of these *Heresies* and *spurious Books*, and those arising from the great *Abuses* and *Superstitions*, which were introduced, and the *Miracles* which were forged in the *fourth Century*; because it was very easy to detect the *former*, by confronting them with the Writings of the Apostles, constantly and universally received as Authentic; whereas it was not so easy to discover, and much less to reform the *latter*. The Credulity and Superstition of the *fourth Age* grew by Degrees so general, and to such a Pitch, that it was extremely difficult for a Christian to preserve himself free from those Vices, and that the Bishops themselves were either guilty of them, or durst not preach or write openly against them, or otherwise interpose their Authority, for fear of occasioning Tumults among

mong the People : And if we throw into the Balance the many spurious Books, forged in *that*, as well as in *former* Ages, we shall soon be convinced that it was much inferior to the *three first*, in point of Integrity and Purity. Let me add, that if *Heresies* and *Forgeries of Books*, at any Time, were a sufficient Evidence of the *Want of Integrity* in the Christians of that Time, the *Apostolic Age* itself would not be free from such an Imputation. Nay, it might be reckoned even worse than any of the succeeding Ages, since the most dangerous Heresies, and the boldest Forgeries took place in that very Age ; the Apostles themselves might be ranked among the Authors, Inventors, or Abettors of them ; which is so very absurd, that if there were no other Considerations to evince the Weakness and Sophistry of the *Doctor's* Reasoning, this alone would do it effectually.

I will likewise allow, that *the most eminent Fathers of the primitive Ages* have frequently cited some of the spurious Books forged in those Ages, and applied them to the Defence of Christianity, as true and genuine Pieces, and of equal Authority with the Scriptures themselves ; though this might be, in some Measure

sure at least, disputed ; for I know of no spurious Book that ever *passed upon all the Fathers as genuine and divine*, as the Doctor positively asserts a little after ^a, or that was ever held *of the same Authority with the Scriptures themselves* : But is it a natural, necessary Consequence, that these *Fathers would also, either forge, or make use of forged Miracles*, as the Doctor here supposes ? For my Part, I see no Manner of Connection between those two Things. The Fathers might do the one, and not do the other. And as it does not appear that they ever forged any Books, under the Names of *Christ* or his *Apostles*, so will it never be proved that they forged Miracles. If some of them mistook spurious Books for genuine, and applied them as such to the Defence of Christianity ; this only shews their Ignorance of true Criticism, their Credulity, and want of Care, but not their Dishonesty ; and it is their *Dishonesty* which must be fully made out, in order to support the Charge brought against them, that they either forged, or made use of forged Miracles, knowing them to be so. But for want of Facts to prove it, the Doctor alleges a long Passage of St. *Cyprian*, which

^a Pag. 41.

he thinks plainly shews that the Corruption of the *three* first Centuries was full as great as that of any succeeding Age; though even in this he acts very unfairly. For St. *Cyprian* does not speak of the State of the Church in general, after the Days of the Apostles, but only of his own Times, or of the particular Period just before the *Decian* Persecution, about the Year CCL; *when the Church Discipline, as he says, was corrupted, and its Faith almost lost, by the long Ease and Peace which it had then enjoyed* FOR NEAR FORTY YEARS^a. It is remarkable, that the Doctor himself quotes these very Words, which clearly confine the Description here given of the Lives of the Christians to the *forty* Years immediately preceeding, and expressly ascribe their Degeneracy to the long Ease and Peace which they had enjoyed: And yet he does not scruple to draw from the whole Passage this very unjustifiable Conclusion: “ This is
 “ the Picture of those Ages, which People
 “ affect to call the *purest*, as it was drawn
 “ from the Life, by the ablest Master of
 “ the Times which he describes: And tho’
 “ the Character of the Drawer must oblige
 us to believe that it bore a great Likeness

^a *De Lapsis*, P. 170.

“ to the Original, yet it is so far from giving us any Idea of Purity or Perfection, that if it had been drawn even for our own Times, we might justly think the colouring too coarse, and the Features charged beyond the Truth^b.”

And now from all these *Considerations* taken together, it does not in any wise follow, *that the forged Miracles of the fourth Century give us just Reason to suspect the Pretensions of the three Ages before.* All that has been said to prove it, either is nothing to the Purpose, or shews quite the Reverse. If indeed mere Surmises, groundless Suspicions, and unjust Presumptions can ever serve instead of Proofs, the *Doctor* has made out his Point to a *Demonstration*. But if it cannot be supported but by *plain Facts*, then this remains to be done, and one should think that at least it should be *the proper Business of his larger Work*, to which we are referred for the Illustration and Proof of his general Conclusion, *That there is no sufficient Reason to believe, from the Testimony of Antiquity, that any miraculous Powers did ever actually subsist in any Age of the Church after the Days of the Apostles.*

^b *Introd. Disc. p. 40.*

Indeed

Indeed had the *Doctor* clearly stated the Question at first, had he given us his Notion of Miracles, with proper Definitions and Distinctions, he might *perhaps* have gained his Point with much less Trouble; or at least, he would have prevented the most material Objections to which his *Discourse* is justly liable. Had he considered Miracles in general, as Works of God alone, *done in Confirmation of a divine Mission*, as I have shewn they are, in the foregoing *Treatise*; then the natural Consequence would have been, that they have ceased upon the Death of the Apostles, since the Apostles are the *last* that ever were honoured with a *divine Mission*. He should also, I think, have distinguished Miracles performed by Men, and, as it were, at their Command, or by a Power delegated to them; from those wrought by God immediately, and without the *Instrumentality* of any Man. I believe it would be difficult to produce any Instance of the *former* well attested, after the Days of the Apostles, and the Apostolic Men; but we have many of the *latter* in Church-History, which cannot be denied without rendering all History doubtful. Such as those extraordinary Interpositions of Providence in favour of Christianity,

stianity, which I have mentioned before ; the miraculous *Sign of the Cross*, which converted *Constantine*, the Miracle of the *Thundering Legion*, the miraculous *Interruption by Fire* of the rebuilding the Temple of *Jerusalem* in the Reign of *Julian*, &c. Such are those many wonderful Cures and Deliverances said to have been wrought at the earnest Intercession, and upon the fervent Prayers of Christians, according to the express Promise in St. *James's* Epistle, c. v. 14, 15. *Is any sick among you, let him call for the Elders of the Church, and let them pray over him—and the Prayer of Faith shall save the Sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.*

That the *Apostolic Men*, by which are to be understood the *seventy Disciples*, whom our Saviour sent to preach the Gospel throughout *Judea*, and those that were commissioned by the Apostles for the same Work, and went under the Names of *Prophets* and *Evangelists*, had the Power of working the former kind of Miracles, is plain from many Instances and Passages out of the *New Testament* ; and that some of them out-lived St. *John*, is not only very probable in itself, but Matter of Fact, as appears from Church-History : How then can Dr. *Middleton* be so
-positive

positive that Miracles *entirely* ceased upon the Death of the Apostles? Besides, this *Hypothesis* is liable to a Difficulty which seems to me sufficient to overthrow it; for as the Apostles died at different Times, and at different Places, Part of the Church must have been destitute of miraculous Powers, while the rest enjoyed them all in their full Extent; but is this in the least probable? Is it natural to think that *Ephesus*, and the adjacent Parts of *Asia*, should be favoured with the Miracles of St. *John* for the *thirty* last Years of his Life, before which all the other Apostles died, and that all the rest of the World, who stood as much, if not more, in need of that *Demonstration of Spirit and Power*, should, during all that Time, see nothing like it, and be totally deprived of that most strong Evidence of the divine Original of the Gospel? Add to this, that as the Apostle did not preach it every where, it was necessary for the Conversion of those remote Nations who had not as yet heard of it, that their Successors should be endued with miraculous Powers, and especially with the *Gift of Tongues*, without which they could not expect any considerable Success. Upon the whole then, it is *highly probable*, if not *absolutely*

absolutely certain, that these miraculous Powers subsisted in the Church some considerable Time after the Days of the Apostles.

And as to the *latter* kind of Miracles, I mean, those *many wonderful Cures and Deliverances*, said to have been wrought at the earnest Intercession, and by the fervent Prayers of Christians, during the *three* first Centuries, it cannot be doubted but that Part of them, at least, are true and Matters of Fact. For to reject them all as so many Lies and Forgeries, is to arraign, not only the Judgment, but the Integrity of the Fathers, and other Ecclesiastical Writers of those Times; it is to suppose that they have, in a Manner, combined to deceive the World, and that, in short, they do indeed deserve the Character of both KNAVES and FOOLS; of which no Man will ever be able to persuade himself, or others, who reflects upon what I have already observed concerning their Learning and Piety, and the superior Purity of the primitive Ages of the Church^a. Besides, it is to be confi-

^a The great Innocency and sublime Virtue of the Christians in those Ages, were so evident, that their very Enemies could not help acknowledging them; as appears by the celebrated Epistle of *Pliny* to *Trajan* (x. 97.) by *Lucian* (*de Morte Peregrini*) by the Edict of *Marcus Aurelius* in their Favour, and by the fair Character which *Ammianus Marcellinus* gives of them and their Religion.

dered that these Miracles are delivered as Facts in their *Apologies*, or Discourses addressed to the *Roman* Emperors and Judges, or to the whole *Heathen* World, “ partly to
 “ mitigate their Hatred of them, and their
 “ Severities against them, and partly to engage them to embrace the Christian Faith;
 “ which surely no Person of Sincerity *would*,
 “ no Man of Wisdom *could* attempt by such
 “ Untruths as might be easily detected by
 “ them.—Would the Fathers appeal (in
 “ this Case) to the Senses, to the Ears and
 “ Eyes, to the Conscience and Experience
 “ of their most spiteful Adversaries? Would
 “ they provoke them to make the Experiment of the Truth of what they say, with
 “ the Hazard of their Lives, and even encourage them to shed their Blood, if, upon Trial, they should fail of the Performance? Or could they, by such Means as these, prevail upon the World, and daily gain new Profelytes, had not the Evidence of Truth confirmed their Sayings^a? And if to this we add, that most of them chearfully suffered all that is terrible to human

^a See Dr. *Whitby's* general Preface to the Epistles of the *New Testament*, wherein this Subject is treated at large, and is very well worth the Consideration of Dr. *Middleton*.

Nature, for the Sake of that Religion which forbids all Manner of Fraud and Imposture, and strictly recommends moral Rectitude and Truth in all Men's Dealings, Charity, Disinterestedness, and even Self-denial; we shall be convinced that their Testimony cannot be questioned, much less rejected, without the greatest Partiality and Injustice.

It is farther to be observed, that our Saviour had expressly promised before he left the World, to communicate miraculous Powers, not only to the Apostles, but to private Christians. *These Signs*, says he^b, *shall follow THEM THAT BELIEVE; in my Name shall they cast out Devils, they shall speak with new Tongues, they shall take up Serpents, and if they drink any deadly Thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their Hands on the Sick, and they shall recover.* Accordingly, we find the Church of *Corinth* about 23 Years after, *i. e.* A. D. LVII, endued with these miraculous Gifts^c: And it appears from what St. Paul tells them^d, *Ye come behind the other Churches in no Gift*, that this Privilege was not peculiar to the *Corinthians*, but common among Christians every where. The parti-

^b Mark xvi. 17, 18. ^c See 1 Cor. xii. xiv. ^d *Ibid.* c. i. 7.
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cular Rules and Directions, which the Apostle gives concerning the Exercise of those miraculous Powers, plainly shew that they must have continued some considerable Time in the Church: And as *Christ's* Promise is without any Limitation of Time, we may reasonably suppose that they lasted as long as there was an immediate Occasion for them; such as the farther Conversion of the World after the Days of the Apostles, as I have already observed, and the Support of Christians under the Persecutions to which they were exposed in the *three* first Centuries. Whoever reads the History of those Persecutions, and considers on one hand, the horrible Cruelties and Torments exercised all over the World against the Professors of Christianity; and, on the other, the Courage and Constancy, and even the Chearfulness and Joy with which they encountered, and underwent them; must acknowledge that nothing less than a supernatural Assistance, and the actual Sight of Miracles, wrought upon the Prayers and Intercessions of some of them, could so nobly and effectually support them to the last. What Encouragement was there to hope, that the Power of God would either deliver them from, or

strengthen them amidst their Sufferings, and give them a happy Issue; when they saw it daily displayed amongst them? And what could more efficaciously inspire them with Patience and Chearfulness, than such a comfortable Hope? If Dr. *Middleton* himself is persuaded that *they wanted every Help*, even the Help of forged Miracles, *towards supporting themselves under the Pressures and Persecutions with which the Powers on Earth were afflicting them*; much more, surely, did they want the Help of *true Miracles*, and reasonable is it to think that God granted it in Fact. The *Doct̃or* who has all along proceeded upon mere *Presumptions*, cannot, I should imagine, refuse to admit *this*, which, I am convinced, has a much greater Degree of *Probability* than any he has hitherto advanced.

The late Mr. *Moyle*, who cannot be suspected of *Credulity*, did not think it reasonable to go such Lengths as this learned Gentleman has done, though he was writing against the Miracle of the *Thundering Legion*, which should naturally have inclined him

* *Introduct. Discourse*, p. 36, 37.

to follow the same *Hypothesis*, that *Miracles*
entirely ceased upon the Death of the Apostles.
Explaining himself upon this Subject, he
says^f, “ When the Truth of our Religion
“ had been confirmed by so many signal
“ Miracles, which were never disowned by
“ the Heathens themselves, it quickly tri-
“ umph’d over all Opposition, and spread
“ with a wonderful Progress over all Parts
“ of the *Roman* Empire. When Chri-
“ stianity had gained such footing in the
“ World, the Work was half done, and the
“ rest might be safely trusted to the preach-
“ ing of our Ministers, and the Sufferings of
“ our Martyrs: And the Ends of Miracles
“ being fully accomplished, ’twas high
“ Time for Miracles themselves to cease;
“ for God Almighty never wastes them in
“ vain. This Notion I take to be very a-
“ greeable to the general Sense of the Pro-
“ testant Divines; and for this reason I give
“ little Credit to any Miracles since the
“ Days of the Apostles. *I am loth, I con-*
“ *fess, to reject all, without Reserve, for the*
“ *Sake of a very remarkable one, which hap-*

^f *Moyle’s Posthumous Works, Vol. II. p. 100, &c.*

“ pened

" pened at the rebuilding the Temple of
 " *Jerusalem* under *Julian*; which is *so ex-*
 " *traordinary* in all its Circumstances, and
 " *so fully attested* by all the Christian and
 " Heathen Historians of that Age; that I
 " don't see with what Forehead a Man can
 " question the Truth of it. Nor does this
 " disagree with my Notion of Miracles; for
 " perhaps from the very first Rise of Chri-
 " stianity, there never was greater Need of a
 " Miracle, than at that Juncture, when the
 " World was relapsing apace into Idolatry:
 " And peradventure God Almighty, in his
 " infinite Wisdom, thought it necessary to
 " interpose in *so miraculous a Manner*, to pre-
 " vent the Re-establishment of the *Jewish*
 " Nation, that they might still continue
 " Exiles and Fugitives, scorn'd and abhorr'd
 " by all Mankind, and remain a lasting Mo-
 " nument of divine Vengeance."

But even this single Miracle, though *so*
extraordinary and *so well attested*, Dr. *Middleton*
 can never admit upon his own Principles; and when his *larger Work* is publish-
 ed, we shall see how he gets rid of it. In
 the mean Time, it is plain that Mr. *Moyle*
 did not dare to reject *all* the Miracles said

to

to have been wrought since the Days of the Apostles, for the Sake of this remarkable *one*; and that the same Reasons which induc'd him to admit it as true, *viz.* that it was *very extraordinary in all its Circumstances* and *very fully attested*, would have also induced him to admit several others, if he had not been too much prejudiced against them all, since they are as extraordinary in themselves, and as fully attested. But I shall insist no farther upon it, these general Hints being sufficient for my present Design. Let me conclude the whole with the following Words of the learned Gentleman who answered Mr. Moyle^s.

“ I was mightily pleased with your Dis-
 “ course about the Confirmation of the Truth
 “ of our Religion by Miracles, till you went
 “ so far as to determine when 'twas high
 “ Time for them to cease, and that you
 “ should say you gave little Credit to any
 “ Miracles since the Days of the Apostles.
 “ As for the Times and Seasons of God Al-
 “ mighty's acting in any extraordinary Man-
 “ ner, he has put them wholly under the
 “ secret Counsel of his own unsearchable
 “ Will, and left nothing for us to deter-

^s *Ibid.* p. 132, and following.

“ mine

“ mine; and he knows best the proper Time
 “ of working a Miracle.—It would not
 “ be more unreasonable to acknowledge this
 “ (*of the Thundering Legion*) — than to
 “ approve of that which was done in *Julian’s*
 “ *Reign*, except it be for the Sake of
 “ an Emperor’s Testimony, which you won’t
 “ allow this to have, though I think this has
 “ as many concurrent Witnesses, both of
 “ Gentiles and Christians, as the other. Nor
 “ was the Juncture much less seasonable.—
 “ The Reason which you give for this Mi-
 “ racle” (that in *Julian’s Reign*) “ is very
 “ good, though not the Chief and Imme-
 “ diate, which was this; our Saviour hav-
 “ ing foretold that *not one Stone of the Tem-
 “ ple should be left upon another*, JULIAN,
 “ according to the propense Malice he burnt
 “ with against *Christ*, was resolved, if pos-
 “ sible, to defeat the Prediction, and prove
 “ him a false Prophet; whereupon he did
 “ both incite and assist the *Jews* (though
 “ bitter Enemies) to rebuild the Temple at
 “ *Jerusalem*. But the Providence of God,
 “ which turns the Counsels of the Wise in-
 “ to Foolishness,—made him the very In-
 “ strument of establishing the Truth of that
 “ Prophecy

“ Prophecy, which he endeavoured by his
 “ Projects to overturn. —
 “ — But with respect to such as scruple
 “ to believe these extraordinary Occurrences,
 “ and others of the like Nature; because
 “ there is not altogether so full a Confirma-
 “ tion as the Nicety of their Faith may re-
 “ quire; I would take the Freedom to say,
 “ that to discredit ALL the Miracles since
 “ the Days of the Apostles, recorded in the
 “ primitive Writers of the Church, is as
 “ great a Fault as to believe them ALL with-
 “ out Reserve. The one indeed is *Credulity*,
 “ which leads to *Superstition*; but the other
 “ is *Scrupulosity*, which tends to *Unbelief*:
 “ Errors to be equally avoided by those who
 “ are Lovers of the Truth; for those who
 “ are so indeed, the Truth doth make them
 “ free; free both from *Bigottry* and *Scepti-*
 “ *cism* in Religion, and Partiality and Pre-
 “ judice in Opinion; so that they are nei-
 “ ther implicitly tenacious on the one hand,
 “ nor doubting of every Thing on the other;
 “ neither over-fond of their own Conceits,
 “ nor blind and averse towards those of other
 “ Men; but, as sincere Lovers of the Truth,
 “ very Indifferent so they possess it, whether

" it be by their own or any other's Disco-
 " very ; and have no other Shyness about
 " receiving it, but that they be not imposed
 " on, and take counterfeit and what will
 " not bear the Touch, for genuine and real
 " Truth; but act according to the divine
 " Rule, which came from *the Father of*
 " *Light and Truth*, TRY ALL THINGS,
 " HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD,"



R I N I S.



ERRATA less material.

PAG. 11. Line 5, *she did it*, read *she did touch it*. P. 32.
 L. 21. *never was alive*, read *never was before alive*.
 P. 50, L. 1. *Working-Miracle Power*, read *Miracle-working Power*. P. 127. L. 13. *in his Name*, read *through his Name*.
 P. 138, L. 15. *independtly*, read *independently*. P. 141, the Argument in the Margin, *shows it*, read *show it*. P. 160.
 L. 23. *Demons and Genii*, read *Demons or Genii*. P. 197.
 L. 4. after *Cases*, dele the Comma, and put a full Stop.
 P. 213. L. 24. after *if they will*, dele the Comma. P. 220.
 L. 18. *that leads Men into Error, and makes*, read *that lead Men into Error, and make*. P. 327. L. 1. *we are in*, read *we are under*. P. 351. L. 2. after *Indeed*, put a Comma.
 P. 358. the Marginal Note, L. 17. *wherein*, read *where*.
 P. 374. L. 2. *great Part*, read *greatest Part*. P. 375. L. 25. after *it was*, put a Comma. P. 385, L. 21. after *their Doctrine*, put a Comma. P. 405, L. 25. after *at the Time*, put a Comma. P. 406. L. 6. after *Miracles*, put a Comma, and dele the Comma after *Judea*. *Ibid.* in the Margin, Quotat. the last Line, before *Mill. Proleg.* put the Reference (c). P. 422. L. 10. *Revelation*, read *Revelations*.
 P. 432. L. 7. *these*, read *those*. *Ibid.* L. 8. *those*, read *these*.
 P. 433. L. 10. *twenty*, read *thirty*. P. 443. L. 16. after *in their*, place this Parenthesis (*the Apostles*.)



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